

Sent: Wednesday, April 26, 2017 7:34 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Hebrews 13:1-17

Having established his case that Hebrew believers could have assurance of salvation and an eternal hope through Christ, under the New Covenant--in a "kingdom which cannot be shaken" (Heb. 12:28) --the writer of Hebrews closes his treatise with a series of exhortations and practical guidelines for Christian living that, according to MacArthur, "help portray the true gospel to the world"! Living by these ethics encourage others to believe in Christ, and bring glory to God! So, we need to pay attention to them!

He begins by calling upon "the brethren" to continue in love for one another! Just as Jesus instructed His disciples, shortly before His crucifixion, to "love one another, as I have loved you" --noting that "by this shall all men know that you are My disciples"! (John 13:34-35) Peter similarly urged believers to "fervently love one another from the heart"! (I Peter 1:22). And the apostle Paul also expressed a deep love and concern for his "Jewish brethren"--his "kinsmen according to the flesh" who were not believers--even to the extent that he "wished" that he himself could be "accursed" for their sake (i.e., for their salvation)! (Romans 9:3)

The writer of Hebrews next reminds his readers (that would include us!) "not to neglect to show hospitality to strangers," suggesting that, in doing this, we might sometimes, "without knowing it, ...be entertaining angels"! Wow! Ever consider that you might actually run into an angel? Suffice it to say that we may never know the influence and far-reaching impact we might have in caring for the needs of others, if we just do it! (Ken Casey's story of "Annie" and the impact a house maid had on her and, by extension, on Helen Keller comes to mind!)

Even more significantly--with regard to meeting the needs of others--Jesus said to His disciples (in Matt. 25:45): "To the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me!"

"Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourself are in the body!" (Heb. 13:3) Gives new appreciation and meaning for those involved in prison ministries! And how about Advocates International!

Hebrews 13:4 also speaks out for marriage! There were some in the early church, apparently, who considered celibacy to be "holier" than marriage, a position the apostle Paul strongly denounced! See I Timothy 4:1-5, among other passages!

Then we're urged (in vs. 5) to "make sure our lives are free from the love of money"--and to be "content with what we have...knowing that He will never leave us nor forsake us!" I Timothy 6:6 sums it up this way: "Godliness with contentment is great gain!"

Do you remember "those who spoke the Word of God to you" and perhaps "led you" to the Lord? Imitate their faith, we're told (in vs. 7)!

In that same light, we're warned "not to be carried away by strange teachings"--and, Lord knows, there's plenty of that going around! Which is why we need to keep into, and know, the Word of God--be a student of it--and avoid any teaching contrary to it! And which is why we meet together to study it!

And just as Jesus suffered and was crucified "outside the gate" of Jerusalem--"to sanctify us through His blood," we are challenged to be willing to "go outside the camp"--perhaps speaking of separating ourselves from the world and its evil culture--"bearing His reproach," and identifying ourselves with Him!

Verse 15 takes us back to "sacrifices"--which the Hebrew readers could well identify with--but here as another reminder that God is not interested in animal sacrifices anymore but with the "sacrifices of praise," and "lips that give thanks to His name"! It's a call to worship in spirit and in truth! But the writer adds, in verse 16, "not to neglect doing good and sharing--more "sacrifices" with which God is pleased!

And, finally, we're urged to work with our leaders--those who are called to "watch over our souls," and who will someday give "an account" for their leadership! And we're to do this in such a way that "brings joy" to them, and to us! We need to remember that we're all part of the "body of Christ" and the "family of God"!

Well, that covers a lot of territory! With lots of things to apply in our walk with the Lord, as "men of the Bible"!

And, in case you haven't noticed, we're quickly closing out our study of Hebrews! But there's still more good stuff to come, in next week's lesson--including the great benediction (vs. 20-21), well worth our attention--and committing to memory!

Have a great week, men!

Lowell