



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

“God Be With You”

November 27, 2022

Hebrews 13:17-21

Clint Pressley

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹ I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

²² I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

(Pastor prays)

In some regards I have dreaded this day. For a year now, we have wrestled through the complexities and unwrapped the mysteries of God in the book of Hebrews. You have been so patient with me as I have struggled each week to use this book to convince you that Jesus is better and worth your life and your all. We have stood together on the mountaintop of God’s greatness and seen His marvelous glories in Christ. And what a way to end our time together with such a beautifully rich benediction and blessing! I want it to be a blessing to you today to strengthen your soul and give a thickness to your faith as we see who God is and what He does.

You can feel the affection the preacher has for his people in the passage even in the buildup to the benediction in verses 20-21. Let's climb the stairs of verses 17-19 and then stand at the summit of verses 20-21 for a little while so we can see who this God is in verse 20 and what He does in verse 21. You see his request in verse 17. Listen to what the preacher says as if he is shepherding your soul with the word of God. *17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

If you will simply live for Christ, it brings great joy to your leaders. I can attest to this truth. There is great joy that I receive when I personally experience Hickory Grove members growing in Christ, hungry for God's word and living out God's will. What a personal encouragement it is to me to see students and fathers and wives and single people living their hard lives for the glory of God.

I can also attest to the groaning in verse 17 when I know a church member that I am responsible for has either walked away or shipwrecked her faith. As he's saying this in verse 18, he asks them to pray for his own soul and life. And I echo that. Pray for me: my life and actions and holiness. Pray that I can honor God with my life.

After talking about himself and the church, he turns our eyes upward to God and calls down one of the most beautiful and theologically packed blessings in the entire Bible. Using this benediction I hope to convince you that...

God is For Us and We Can Trust Him

In this passage there are 5 beautiful attributes of God and 1 request.

He is the God of peace

What a great and glorious rudimentary freeing truth. ²⁰ *Now may the God of peace* - here is the great promise of the entire New Testament and the hope for our tomorrow. God doesn't hate us. He doesn't stand to condemn us and isn't out to get us. This entire book has been about Jesus Christ and the riches of what He has done for us at the cross. Because of Jesus Christ and His cross, God's disposition toward those of us who are in Christ is one of love and reconciliation and satisfaction and joy. Here is the secret of Christianity and the reason we sing, *in Christ he is a God of peace*. It's what Paul said in Romans 5:1. *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Do you have peace with God through faith in Christ? This is how we are able to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. This is how the martyrs sang hymns on the way to their executions. The peace of God gives you the steady will to survive when you stand by a freshly dug grave or work in a secular world or have children that walk away from church. The peace of God is the indwelling confidence of the Holy Spirit. The peace of God gives you the ability to wait because Jesus is better. Here is the absolute declaration that to live is Christ and to die is gain. "And even if he slay me, yet I will praise Him." God is for us and we can trust Him. He is the God of peace.

He is the God who forgives

Sit up and take note as God solves the worst problem you ever had.

²⁰ *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus*, this benediction shows us the centrality of the resurrection. Here is the foundation of our faith. Here is the reason we hope. Here is the guarantee of our forgiveness. Here is the doctrine that gives us a day. The preacher waits to the very end of his letter to bring forward the joy of the resurrection. This means several things.

Presupposes the crucifixion. That Jesus died as a one-time sacrifice in the place of sinners. That is the centrality and necessity of the cross.

The resurrection means an accepted sacrifice. That God accepts Jesus' payment on our behalf. That the crucifixion worked. That there is nothing else to do to have peace with God; it is done in Christ.

The resurrection gives us a people. A people that gathers together on the Lord's Day to celebrate our forgiveness and worship the resurrected Jesus.

The resurrection gives us graveyard hope. There was a terrible helicopter crash last week that killed a WBTV meteorologist Jason Meyers. The memorial service was yesterday. And Jason Meyers' wife— they were both strong believers at Mercy Church— she gave such a beautiful “peace of God” testimony. When we lose somebody we loved so much, we can have the peace of God because you will see him again. Have you claimed forgiveness at the empty tomb? Have you found hope there? This empty tomb, this resurrection, reminds us that God is for us and He can be trusted. He is the God of peace and He is the God who forgives.

He is the God who claims

Let me show you what I mean. It's tucked away right there in verse 20. It is a beautiful phrase. ²⁰ *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, What a great phrase. Our Lord Jesus. To get a good grasp on it let's look backward through it.*

Jesus. A real man. The second Adam. He lived as a man for men and women and then died in the place of us sinners as a substitute to purchase us as His people. Do you claim Him as your substitute? Here is our hope. Lord. Ruler. To own. To have us as His own and all rights to. This speaks to the right that Jesus has to all the parts of our lives. Here is joyful submission to the rule of Christ. It is genuine salvation; it trusts and submits to the lordship of Christ. Are you preaching lordship salvation? There isn't any other kind.

Our. That is possessive and collective. It is possessive because it is personal faith in Jesus, that you belong to Him and Him to you. It is collective because

we are a family, and we have a bond. It's a fellowship. We are connected and we care for one another. This God has purchased you at the cost of Christ and claimed you as His own and our response is that Jesus is Lord, our Lord Jesus.

He is the God who cares

I told you this verse was packed. ²⁰ *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep,* this comes from the 23rd Psalm to John 10 and 1 Peter 2. Jesus Christ cares for His people like a shepherd does his sheep. He makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us besides still waters. The shepherd restores our souls.

A. W. Pink says, He is the **good** shepherd in death, John 10:10. He is the **great** shepherd in resurrection, Hebrews 13. He is the **chief** shepherd in glory, 1 Peter 5. He is the great shepherd like He is the High Priest. The Good Shepherd fights off the wolves and throws out the goats but He cares for His sheep. John 10:11 says, ¹¹ *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* One of the great truths of being a Christian is Christ as savior and shepherd. He is providing, healing, protecting. He is patient and guiding. The truth is that God is for us and that we can trust Him. He is the God of peace. He is the God who forgives. He is the God who claims. He is the God who cares.

He is the God who keeps His promise

²⁰ *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,*

Here the preacher takes us right back once again to the cross. What happened at the cross? What is the eternal covenant? What promise was made there in blood? And in simple, brief language, let me say it like this. At the cross Jesus died in the place of sinners. A once and for all sustaining sacrifice, forever making peace with God for all who will repent and believe. There's the covenant of grace established in the blood of Jesus. The covenant

is yours through faith. All five of these attributes tell us that God is for us. My last point now turns to you. Based on all that you've heard...

Ask God to help and heal you

²⁰ Now may the God of peace ...

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

²² I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

See that word - "equip." That word describes what soldiers are doing when they are getting their gear together for battle or sailors loading their ships with goods before setting sail. It's doctors setting a broken leg back into place so you can get back into action. It's fishermen mending their nets, restoring them back to their original condition. He is asking, may the Lord restore you so that you might do what you were intended to do for the glory of God through Jesus Christ. The preacher brings up doing God's will in this last verse and he is praying that God will mend his people so they can live in God's will. God's will isn't something you *know* as much as it is something you *do*.

Let's end slowly with this question. What do you need in order for you to do God's will? What needs to happen? What needs to change? What needs to stop? Verse 21 is a prayer of sorts for the enabling power of God to work. It gives strength to resist, to persevere, to take the appropriate steps, to break the cycle, to institute change and to find the willpower. It's the enabling power of God to muster the courage, to create a plan and execute that plan for the glory of God through Jesus Christ. God is for us and you can trust Him. He is the God of peace and the God who forgives. He's the God who claims and the God who cares. He's the God who keeps His promises. Ask God to help you and heal you.

²⁰ Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Pastor prays)