



Persisting Love to Keep Moving Forward

Lesson Sixty-Four • Hebrews 13:18-19, 22-25

The Book of Hebrews is a **SERMON** sent in a **LETTER**!

Where does the sermon end and the letter begins to end? After vv. 18-19? Vv. 20-21?

"I exhort you to bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly." (13:22)

Why does the pastor-teacher write four more verses with six more commands if we include vv. 18-19?

God's **ORDINARY MEANS** of grace keep us moving forward together in persisting love!

Five Ordinary Means of Grace to Keep Us Moving Forward Together in Persisting Love

1. Ordinary Means: **PRAY** for One Another as Believer Priests.

"Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner. (vv. 18-19)

- Even pastors **NEED** the prayers of believer priests.

"Pray for us"

What Do Pastors Need Church Members to Pray for Them?

1. Pray for them as **SHEEP** who are *like* you.

2. Pray for them as **SHEPHERDS** who are *for* you. Hebrews 13:17

- Pray for your *benefit* as members.
- Pray for their *burden* as pastors. 2 Corinthians 7:5; 11:28
- Pray for our *battle* together in the Lord. 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1-5; Col 4:3-4; Eph 6:19; Rom 15:30-32

- Prayer **ENTERS** the throne room of the Holy of holies to receive mercy and grace in time of need.

"for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things." (v. 18b)

Believers always possess a clear conscience in Christ (9:9, 14; 10:22), but we must also always maintain a clear conscience before Christ (13:18).

How you worship as a believer priest impacts how you live!

God's grace keeps "working in us every good thing" (v. 21), so we can keep "living well" in all things (v. 18)!

- Prayer makes **POSSIBLE** what is humanly impossible.

"And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner." (v. 19)

What Hindered the Pastor-Teacher from Being Present with Them?

Detained by *authorities* or *delayed* by *circumstances*?

But not **DERAILED** from God's purpose to keep moving forward toward his final salvation!

- Urgently: "*all the more*"
- Quickly: "*the sooner*"
- Personally: "*And I urge you...I may be restored to you*"

Persist in Love: Together Make Requests in God's Presence!

Praying people are loving people and loving people are praying people!

2. Ordinary Means: **PERSEVERE** in the Word as Believer Priests.

"But I urge (exhort!) you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly." (v. 22)

"Hebrews is a sermon. In reading the NT we do not have abstract theology unrelated to life. It was a pastoral issue that precipitated the letter, and we only approach it rightly if we receive it in the same pastoral spirit." –Tom Schreiner

- Persevere in being **EXHORTED** by the Word.

"Now I exhort you, brothers and sisters, to persevere with this word of exhortation" cf. 3:13; 10:25; 12:5

- Persevere in **APPLYING** the Word.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

What is one major application you are already applying from our study of Hebrews?

- Persevere in the Word when it's **DIFFICULT**.

"for I have written to you briefly,"

What Does "Briefly" Emphasize?

1. Brevity: *The length of the letter?*
2. Necessity: *Not enough time to write more? (11:32)*
3. Difficulty: *The topic is hard to summarize or grasp? (9:5)*
4. Passivity: *Your hearts have become apathetic and "hard" of hearing? (5:11-12; 6:1-2)*

There's more you need to hear and heed, but you have become hard of hearing, so that's why I want to urgently come in-person as soon as possible!

5. Severity: *The warnings are real, but God's grace is greater still?*

Overall, it means not saying less but not saying more than is presently needed!

Persist in Love: Together Revere God's Precepts!

Those who fear God hear God to obey God: Be in the Word and bear with the Word when others exhort you!

3. Ordinary Means: **PRIORITIZE** In-Person Fellowship Together as Believer Priests.

"Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you." (v. 23)

"The author wants to see the readers so he can minister face-to-face with them, for such ministry is typically the most effective." –Tom Schreiner

Persist in Love: Together Relate with God's People!

4. Ordinary Means: **PARTICIPATE** in Worship as a Local Assembly of Pastors and Believer Priests.

"Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you." (v. 24)

"The church of Jesus Christ is a family. Greetings and news about one another are significant, for every person matters; every person is important. Part of what it means to love one another is to greet one another warmly and in love." –Tom Schreiner (432)

Pastors and Members: Equal before God but different roles in ministry!

Men and Women: Equal before God but different roles in marriage and ministry!

Persist in Love: Rejoice Together as God's People!

5. Ordinary Means: **PURSUE** God's Grace Together as Believer Priests.

"Grace be with you all" (v. 25; cf. 2:9; 4:16; 10:29; 12:15; 13:9, 25)

Persist in Love: Together Rely on God's Provision!

Stay fixated on Jesus' greater glory to hold fast to our confession and keep moving forward to our final salvation!

Let's Exhort One Another as Long as It's Called Today! Hebrews 4:14-16

Why Did the Pastor-Teacher End His Sermon Like a Letter?

1. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *preaching*.

The pastor-teacher, having heard of their spiritual apathy and slow fade toward apostasy, knew they needed this “word of exhortation” (like the *synagogue sermon* in Acts 13:15, but he wasn’t there in-person to preach it. So, he committed his sermon to writing and sent it with a *letter ending* to be read to the congregation. (13:22)

2. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *pastoring*.

The pastor-teacher identifies himself with their plurality of leaders and fulfills his calling as an under shepherd who oversees the flock and will give an account to God for their souls. So, he committed this sermon to writing and added the *letter ending* to remind the congregation of his manner of life and their need to imitate him, as well as their present and past leaders – including the Old Covenant worthies – all for their joy and God’s glory. (11:38–12:2; 13:7, 17-19)

3. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *practical application*.

The pastor-teacher has carefully crafted this *letter ending* to drive home the message of his sermon to the heart of his hearers one last time. Having concluded his sermon with the benediction through the Great Shepherd (13:20-21), he continues to “exhort” them with six more closing commands ending with “grace be with you all.” (13:22, 25)

4. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of the *priesthood of believers*.

The pastor-teacher leverages the *letter ending* to identify with his hearers as a fellow believer priest in need of prayer, fellowship, and gathered worship, while modeling the partnership between pastors and believer priests in the local church. (13:18-19, 23-24)

He is “asking for the same support from them that he has encouraged them to give one another. His request is a reminder of the special need for prayer felt by those in places of leadership within the community of God’s people.” – Gareth Lee Cockerill

5. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *personal relationships*.

The pastor-teacher utilizes the *letter ending* to address several personal issues that would only have distracted from the body of his sermon. (13:18-19, 23)

6. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *passing on the faith*.

The pastor-teacher’s *letter ending* connects his sermon with the other early Christian letters in the New Testament as well as the Pauline Circle via the mention of “our brother, Timothy.” By doing so he lays claim to being a faithful preacher of the gospel handed down through the apostles from Christ Himself. (2:1-4; 13:23)

7. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of *personal integrity*.

The pastor-teacher testifies to his own godly character and conduct by identifying closely with both the needs of his hearers and the life he has been exhorting them to live. He needs the same grace that comes from the throne of grace as much as they do and we do! (4:16; 13:7, 17, 19, 25)

8. Because the pastor-teacher has a high view of the *perfection of the Scriptures*.

The pastor-teacher includes the *letter ending* to his sermon to emphasize again the perfection of the Scriptures as God Himself speaking to His people. The interweaving of the *sermon ending* with the *letter ending* preserves the power of hearing God’s Voice speaking through *His preached and written Word*. Just as he introduces all the Old Testament references as *God speaking* (Father, Son, or Spirit) and not as the *human authors writing*, adding the *letter ending* preserves the nature of the sermon itself as the Word spoken. God is *speaking* through this *sermon-letter* to His people: “Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.” (3:7-8)

By ending his sermon as a letter, the pastor-teacher models what he values and what he wants us to value as fellow believer priests.