

Knowing and Growing in Christ
 Hebrews 13:15-19 (Week 52) 07/06/2025
 Christian Sacrifice

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to 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. (Hebrews 13:15-19)

Introduction & Review

- Today we draw **very near** to **the conclusion** of our study through the Letter to the Hebrews.
- We have today's message from **Hebrews 13:15-19**, which _____ read for us.
- And then one more, from **verses 20-25**, where we will find one of the **great Benedictions of the New Testament**.
- **However**, the timing for **these final messages** isn't great.
- Because on Wednesday, Christina and I are heading to St. Louis,
- Where 3 of our grandchildren live.
- And when we return, we're taking care of our other 3 grandchildren for 7 days.
- So, I'll be out of commission for a couple of weeks.
- But be assured, (**Lord Willing**) we will finish **Hebrews this Summer**.
- And in the **meantime**, I believe you can look forward to several messages from the **Psalms**.
- **This is the Summer of Psalms and Hebrews 13**.
- And to better understand **Hebrews 13:15-19** (today's passage).
- We need review **Hebrews 13:9-14**.
- There the focus was on **Christian Convictions**, what we hold as true.
- In **verse 9**, we are warned against false teaching (false truth) ...

⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. (Hebrews 13:9)

- It seems that there were **diverse and strange teachings**...
- About eating certain **foods** that would provide **some kind of spiritual benefit**.

- And since this letter was written to **Jewish converts to Christianity**.
- This false teaching probably related to **the need for Christians to keep the Jewish Passover meal or other sacramental feast**.
- And if believed and applied it would have drawn people **away from Christ**,
- and back into their **Jewish religious beliefs**.
- Which has been the **author's constant concern throughout this letter**.
- These **new Jewish converts to Christianity** were being pressured by their fellow Jews to reject **Christ and return to Judaism**.
- **And apparently**, the Jews had been ridiculing Christianity because it lacked the outward religious ceremonies that **were such an important part of Judaism**.
- **Hebrews 13:9** indicates that this included the fact that Christians did not partake of the Jewish sacred feasts and observe their many **laws concerning food**.
- And in **verse 10** the author writes...

¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. (Hebrews 13:10)

- The altar was the place where the Jews offered their animal (and other) sacrifices to God.
- And it seems, the Christians were also being ridiculed because they offered **no sacrifices to God**.
- The author **responds by pointing out that Christians do have a sacrificial altar**.
- **But** those who continue to **serve at the tent (to make sacrifices on the Jewish altar)**
- have no right to come to **our altar and eat**.
- **And** what is our altar, well **verse 12** makes that clear...

¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. (Hebrews 13:12)

- Our altar is the **cross of Jesus Christ**.
- Where he gave his life as the all-sufficient **once for all sacrifice**.
- Through Christ's sacrifice those who trust in Him are **sanctified by his own blood**.
- So, **in terms of our salvation and sanctification the sacrifice is not ours to make**,
- but Christ's alone.
- **However**, that does not mean that as Christians **we do not offer sacrifices to God**.
- But they're very different kinds of sacrifice.
- Verses 13 & 14 tell us our sacrifices begin, not with sacramental eating or the blood of animals,
- but by identifying ourselves **with Christ and his Kingdom**.

¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:13-14)

- As Christians we sacrifice our very lives, **we give everything to Christ**.
- We sacrifice our ties to this world (where we have no lasting city)

- And we share in Christ's suffering outside the camp, **where we seek the city that is to come.**
- **The kingdom of God.**
- **We sacrifice everything for Christ and his Kingdom!**
- And in our passage for today, **verses 15-19**, the author continues **this theme of sacrifice.**
- He points out **three areas of Christian Sacrifice.**
- Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, we no longer sacrifice animals or anything on a physical altar.
- Instead, we sacrifice our very lives, including... **First,**

1. The Sacrifice of Speech

- In **verse 15** we read...

¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

- **Through him...**
- Through Christ who made the ultimate sacrifice of giving his life **on calvary's cross.**
- Through him (by his power and because of what he has done for us) ...
- We can and must continually offer **up a sacrifice of praise to God.**
- With our lips, with our voice, by speaking we must acknowledge his name.
- This is to be **the continual sacrifice** of our whole lives,
- Not a sacrifice for forgiveness of sin and the salvation of our soul.
- **But a sacrifice of gratitude and praise for all God has done and will do for us.**
- And this **sacrifice of praise** was foreshadowed in **Old Testament**,
- by what is known as the **Thank Offering.**
- The **Thank Offering** was not offered to **make atonement for sin**,
- but it was offered in **gratitude for salvation and for the many gifts God has given.**
- **Leviticus 7:12-13** describes the thank offerings.

¹² If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the thanksgiving sacrifice unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of fine flour well mixed with oil. ¹³ With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving he shall bring his offering with loaves of leavened bread. (Leviticus 7:12-13)

- Jews, wishing to express gratitude to God, **offered (not an animal sacrifice)...**
- **But bread or cakes or grain to be used by the priests in God's service.**
- And this is the kind of sacrifice **Christians offer to our Lord.**
- We freely offer **our goods** (which we will talk about in our next point)
- and ourselves (our lips, our voice) for his service and praise.

- For the Jews, this **thank offering** was an occasional and **special mark of piety**.
- But for the **Christian** our **thank offering**, **our sacrifice of praise**,
- is to be a **continual part of our lives**.
- We are to be characterize as those who continually praise God and acknowledge his name.
- Declaring that, by his grace and through the cross of Jesus Christ, He has saved us from our sins.
- This sacrifice of praise is **our right response** to receiving **the grace and mercy of God**.
- Paul, in Romans chapters 1-11 details all that God (by grace and mercy) has done to save and sanctify us.
- And then he begins **Romans 12** with our response to God...

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

- In response to God's work in our lives, we are to present our bodies to him as living sacrifices!
- And this certainly includes **presenting our speech (our lips) to Him**,
- offering him a continual sacrifice of praise, **which is our spiritual worship!**
- **We are saved by God in order that we might become worshippers of God.**
- What a contrast this is to the **way many view Christianity**.
- They think the highest **aspiration** is simply to "**get saved**."
- If they can just make it into heaven, that will be good enough for them.
- **But this is not all that Christianity is about.**
- Yes, through Christ great sacrifice, our sins are atoned for.
- We receive forgiveness, we are no longer guilty of sin.
- **And we are declared righteous before God.**
- This is the doctrine of **Justification**, and we **rightly emphasize it!**
- But Justification **is not the end of our salvation**,
- but rather the **beginning** and the **means** to a life of **pleasing sacrificial service unto God**.
- **You see**, Justification **gives us entrance into the presence of God**,
- So that we may live for him, with **joy as His children**,
- and that we might offer our lives **as sacrifices of praise** for his **service and pleasure**.
- **Jesus said...**

²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23-24)

- This, my friends, **is why we are Justified (saved)**.
- God **saves us** in order that we might **worship him in spirit and truth as he deserves**.
- That we might live sacrificially unto him, **to offer our voice and life to him in worship**.
- All for the blessing of others and for the glory of God.

- Now you might be thinking, **how can I do that.**
- My time is so filled with **the things of this world.**
- I mean **I have to work** to provide for **myself and my family.**
- I have to take care of my house, my cars, my animals, my kids and grandkids, and so much more.
- How can I **continually offer to God** a sacrifice of praise.
- How can I continually **acknowledge him with my lips.**
- Do we all have to **become professional Christian singers or worship leaders.**
- And the answer of course is NO!
- You certainly don't want me to lead our corporate worship!
- What we need to understand is that worship, a sacrifice of praise,
- is not primarily singing worship songs.
- It is living a worshipful life.
- It is living not for ourselves but for God.
- As Paul wrote to the Colossians...

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

- Whatever we do in our speech and our actions,
- Everything is to be done acknowledging the name of the Lord Jesus and giving thanks...
- **Offering thanks to God the Father.**
- **So,** I hope you see that our worship, our sacrifice of praise, our acknowledging God with our lips Goes beyond our words and **includes our deeds**, how we live our lives.
- But I don't want us to miss the importance of **our speech.**
- Because that's the main focus of **verse 15...**
- Again,

15 ...let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God... (Hebrews 13:15)

- The basic point is that we are to praise God and profess the Christian faith with our lips.
- This is not just about our gatherings for corporate worship.
- But it includes everything we say.
- Through our speech, our heart is revealed. As Jesus said,

34 ...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (Matthew 12:34)

- What is in your heart will come out of your mouth.
- The only way, therefore, to **have a clean mouth is to have a clean heart.**
- Clean and wholesome speech, therefore, **indicates a whole life lived to the praise of God.**

- So powerful is our **speech** as a **measure** of our true **spiritual condition**,
- that Paul used it in **Romans 3** as a summary of **human depravity**:

13 “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” 14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” (Romans 3:13-14)

- Some of the worst **sins committed against God** are committed by speech.
- Denial of his very existence, ridiculing him and his people, cursing his name.
- **Or maybe worst of all** claiming to speak for God when you are actually **seeking to advance your own agenda**, or the agenda of the evil one.
- All of this and more is a violation of the **3rd commandment**...

7 “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain... (Exodus 20:7)

- This is more than using God’s name as a curse word.
- It’s taking God’s name and defiling it, using it to justify your own sinful pursuits.
- And not only do we sin against God with our speech.
- But some of the **greatest harm** done to other people is done by spoken words.
- **“Sticks and stones may break my bones,”** we say, **“but words can never hurt me.”**
- **That is simply untrue.** James says,

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell... It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:6, 8)

- All of us can think of things said to us, **perhaps recently**, perhaps years ago,
- that **hurt us** deeply.
- And unfortunately, we’ve likely done the same to others.
- Words are **powerful weapons**, but also powerful instruments of blessing and worship.
- **Verse 15** uses the expression ***the fruit of lips***.

- This is a quote from **Hosea 14:2**, which speaks of **God’s people offering him**

2 ...words and return to the LORD; say to him, “Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows (or fruit) of our lips. (Hosea 14:2)

- Hosea says that the vows (the fruit) of our lips can be a **sacrificial offering**,
- Far more valuable to God than any outward religious display we offer,
- is that we should **sacrificially devote our speech to him**.
- That we would continually **offer a sacrifice of praise to him**.
- That we would **continually acknowledge his name!**
- This is something we should **diligently seek to develop in our lives**.

- We must ask God to **sanctify your lips**, that our speech (in all areas of life)
- Not just at church, but in our **homes**, at our **jobs**, in our **neighborhoods**, at the grocery store, etc.... **would bring glory to His name.**
- So, we've seen the **Sacrifice of Speech.**
- And **now we turn to...**

2. The Sacrifice of Sharing

- **Verse 16...**

16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:16)

- This certainly **includes doing good in all aspects of our lives.**
- Showing kindness and care to others.
- Loving your neighbor as yourself.
- But this verse **especially speaks of our duty to share.**
- To **show generosity** to those in need,
- to **give freely of our wealth** because we love others more than our money.
- And notice the author says "**such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**"
- So, the question is, do you have a desire to please God?
- Or did you even know you could please God?
- Well, at least one way to accomplish that,
- one way to know God is pleased with you is to sacrificially share what you have with others.
- Not just giving out of your abundance alone,
- but giving to those **in need until it is a sacrifice for you.**
- And why does **sacrificial giving please God?**
- Because it shows **not only your love for others.**
- But your trust, **not in your material possession**, but in the LORD!
- **False religion** is always exposed by **its attitude toward possessions.** Jesus said...

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24)

- **James 1:27** adds,

27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:27)

- This is not **works-righteousness**, earning brownie points from God for giving to others.
- This is the **true and spiritual worship** that God demands **all through the Bible.**

- The **prophet Micah** also dealt with this contrast between **external and true religion**.
- **Micah is asked,**

6 “With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

- **Basically, the question is, how should I worship the LORD!**
- To this the reply comes...

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6-8)

- What God requires of **his people**, what **honors and glorifies and pleases him**,
- centers on how they view themselves, walking humbly with God.
- And how they treat others with justice and kindness.
- We see from this how practical true **spiritual worship** is.
- **In his commentary on Hebrews, George Guthrie** writes,

Money is an area that tests the authenticity of our devotion to God. The heart that is too close to the back pocket is out of place and grows numb to the good gifts and provisions of God. [Our use of money] provides an arena in which great spiritual vitality can be grown and demonstrated. (George H. Guthrie)

- Just as with our speech, **how we use our money reveals our heart**.
- It is only when the heart no longer **covets what the world has**,
- But instead **draws near to God**, knowing that all we have is really his.
- It is then that we will use our money as **an instrument** of sacrificial worship and service.
- It is then that we will be...

pleasing to God

- **Ultimately**, it is for God that we seek **to do good and share what we have**.
- Because such true spiritual worship will often go unnoticed and unheralded in the world and even in the church.
- It is God we serve when we minister to others,
- When we put their needs ahead of our own **financial gain**.
- **Corrie ten Boom** tells a story about the example set by her father, a poor but godly watchmaker.
- One morning their family **had gathered for prayer**,
- asking God to send them a customer to buy a watch, so they could pay bills that had come due.
- A customer did come, picking out a quite expensive watch,
- casually remarking as he paid that another merchant had sold him a defective watch.
- **Casper**, Corrie's father, asked to examine that watch, and pointed out that only a minor repair was needed.

- Assuring the man that he had been sold a fine-quality watch by the other merchant,
- **Corrie's father refunded the** money as the man returned the watch he had intended to buy.
- Little Corrie asked, "**Papa, why did you do that?**"
- Aren't you worried about the bills you have due?"
- Her father replied, "**There is blessed and unblessed money,**"
- adding that God would not be honored if he allowed another man's reputation to be wrongly harmed, **especially since the other merchant was also a believer.**
- He assured the little girl that God would provide,
- and just a few days later a man came and bought the most expensive watch they had,
- the sale of which not only paid their bills but **also paid for two years of Corrie's education.**
- What an excellent reminder this is, that when it comes to financial hardship.
- **and temptations to be less than honest.**
- Our godly response will reveal to our children, to GOD and others that we trust not in the things of this world (not in money) **but we trust in the LORD!**
- And by this **HE IS GREATLY PLEASED!!**
- So, we've seen **the sacrifice of speech and sharing.**
- And finally, we come to...

3. The Sacrifice of Submitting

- In **verses 17-19** we read...

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. (Hebrews 13:17-19)

- This is really **the conclusion to the body** of this Letter.
- What follows is a **benediction and final greetings.**
- But here we have **the final exhortation,**
- **Which is a call to submitting to (and praying for) your spiritual leaders.**
- And at first you might not think it fits in with the previous **two exhortations,**
- both of which specifically address **sacrificing.**
- Sacrificing with your **speech** (praising and acknowledging God)
- And sacrificing your **possessions** (Sharing with those in need).
- So, what does submitting to and praying for leaders have to **do with sacrifice?**
- Well, if you've ever been in **the position of** submitting to a church leader.
- Or if you've given yourself over to prayer for your leaders,
- Then you know what kind of sacrifice this entails.

- **Especially in our culture.**
- Where we value **self-reliance and individualism and personal autonomy**
- Obedience and submission to **another human being can be a great sacrifice.**
- And what we must understand from the start, is that in the Bible,
- **all submission**, whether of **citizens to governments, children to parents, wives to husbands,**
- **or congregations to church leaders.**
- All submission is done under the Lord and unto the Lord.
- It is a **sacrificial act of worship** and trust in God.
- Now of course, as we know...

29 ...We must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

- But **this verse** is not meant to **eradicate our submission as citizens, children, wives.**
- Even when those we are submitting to (governments, parents, husbands) are not Christians.
- It is meant to **put a boundary around our submission.**
- We **must submit to these authorities** unless they command us to do something that clearly goes against the will and word of God.
- And this is also the case in the church,
- where hopefully our leaders are believers and would not command us to go against the word of God.
- **Now, verse 17** gives two commands, **accompanied by compelling reasons for godly submission...**
- The first of command is to...

Obey your leaders

- This mainly speaks of receiving the teaching given by your spiritual leaders.
- The Greek word for obey is (*peitho*) **PAY THO,**
- and it is also used for “**being persuaded.**” or to **Trust in.**
- So, IN GENERAL we are to **trust in and obey the teachings of our spiritual leaders.**
- That is **our default position.**
- But as we do that, we must also be like the **Bereans who...**

11 ...received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (Acts 17:11)

- As our **spiritual leaders** expound the word of God, **pointing out applications for us to obey.**
- And we must obey!
- But we must also examine the Scriptures to make sure what they are teaching is from God's word.
- **That we are not being led away by diverse and strange teachings.**

- The second word...

Submit to them

- This speaks of yielding to **proper authority established by God**.
- So, like Paul tells...

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22)

- The same thing could be said **of Christians**.
- **As we** submit to our spiritual leaders, we are ultimately submitting to the Lord.
- Now again, this is certainly something **we can struggle with**,
- Why should I submit to the Leaders, in our case **The Elders of Bridges Church**,
- Aren't they just fallible men, **don't they make mistakes?**
- Well, that is certainly true, **but nonetheless**,
- God in his word has called us **to obey and submit to the leaders in His Church**.
- And to help us with that **let me give you six Biblical reasons** for obedience and submission to **your Spiritual Leaders**.
- The first is **seen in the word...**

leaders

- This word can also be translated as **"guides."**
- True spiritual leaders are those who **go before the flock into the Word of God**,
- into **prayer**, and into the **Christian life**.
- Just as we learned in Hebrews that **Jesus is our all-sufficient guide leading us to God**,
- So also, our Lord has **appointed leaders** in the church to guide us on his behalf.
- This is especially linked to the idea of being persuaded,
- because **Christian leaders** are guides **into the Word of God**.
- We should not say, **"I believe it or I'll do it because Pastor Cliff said so,"**
- but rather, **"I have been taught that this is the Word of God,**
- **it has been explained to me by my pastor,**
- **and my conscience now is bound to God to believe and obey.**
- **Second**, we submit to **spiritual leaders** because their authority comes from Christ.
- **Ephesians 4:11–12** says,

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12)

- Christian leaders **are gifts from Christ** to **serve His Church**.
- Therefore, we are to receive them as **authorities established by Jesus himself**.
- And we are to submit to that authority.
- **Third**, Hebrews tells us **these leaders**

are keeping watch over your souls

- Many people have a **security company** to **help them protect their possessions**.
- Installing and **monitoring alarms** against break-ins and theft.
- And when **the company gives advice** about the security of the house,
- the homeowner obediently responds.
- But the leaders mentioned in Hebrews have the great responsibility of **watching over our very souls**.
- They are gifted by God to teach and lead.
- They may lie awake at night—**that is what the verb “keeping watch”** literally means—
- Thinking about our spiritual well-being, how they might help and support us in the faith.
- **What better reason could there be for us gladly submit to their teaching and leadership?**
- And **fourth**, as under shepherds they are...

those who will have to give an account. (for your soul)

- to the **Chief Shepherd**.
- They are not serving **for their own benefit** but for ours,
- and they are **called to give an account**.
- Our response, **then**, is to **help them** through **trust and obedience**.
- **Fifth**, our **obedience** is what makes **spiritual leadership** a joy and not a burden.

Let them do this (lead, watch over your soul) with joy and not with groaning...

- **Know this!**
- **One of the greatest things that causes any pastor to groan**, to be discouraged.
- Is when the congregation does **not obey what he teaches from God’s Word**.
- And one of the greatest **joys** a pastor experiences is when what he teaches from God’s word is seen in the lives of church members.
- So, for example, if you want to bring me joy...

¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have (not with me but with those in need), for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. And bring joy to your Pastor... (Hebrews 13:16)

- **Finally**, this verse concludes...

for that (causing your leaders to groan, to be discouraged) would be of no advantage to you

- It is no advantage to us,
- for our pastors and elders to be burdened by division and strife and unbelief in the church.
- It's not good for them and it's not good for us.
- So, submit to their God given authority.
- **Those are the six Biblical reasons for us all to submit to our spiritual leaders.**
- But there is also a message **for spiritual leaders here as well.**
- As leaders **we are to serve as guides** in the **Word of God and the Christian life,**
- practicing what we preach and **setting a godly example.**
- We **bear the burden of authority** and therefore **of responsibility.**
- It will keep us up at **night, thinking about the sermon to preach,**
- and the sheep who **may be going astray.**
- Knowing that we are **watching over and will give an account for their souls.**
- No wonder that the Bible uses Shepherds as a prime illustration of Christian leadership.
- 16th Century English Reformer **Hugh Latimer** said,

Now these shepherds . . . they keep their sheep, they run not hither and thither, spending the time in vain and neglecting their office and calling. . . . I would that clergymen . . . would learn this lesson by these poor shepherds; which is this, to abide by their flocks and by their sheep, to tarry amongst them, to be careful over them . . . and feed their sheep with the food of God's Word. (Hugh Latimer)

- Even the strongest of men realizes **his need of grace for a calling like this.** Paul himself said,

¹⁶ ...Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Corinthians 2:16)

- No wonder, then, that the writer of Hebrews, who was certainly a leader of the church he is writing to, goes on to say,

¹⁸ Pray for us... (Hebrews 13:18)

- If **obedience and submission** are our duty **to Christian leaders,**
- surely **prayer is the greatest ministry** anyone can offer for a **pastor or elder.**
- The writer of **Hebrews** adds,

for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. (Hebrews 13:18)

- This comment is certainly meant to direct the prayers of these Hebrew Christians.
- "I see what the duty of an elder is, and I think I am on target," **the leader is saying,**
- "But please pray that I might be faithful, serving God with a clean conscience and living honorably as an example to the others."

- **If you do not pray for these things regularly for your pastors and elders,**
- Then you fail to realize both, **their importance for the church**
- and the weakness of their **sinful nature, which like yours is flesh and subject to temptation.**
- We are living in a time marked by terrible sins among spiritual leaders,
- Sexual and financial sins that bring great damage to the gospel and God's people,
- and we should cry to God that **such a thing should not occur in our church.**
- We need to pray for **the protection of our leaders,**
- both from spiritual attack **and the normal dangers of life in this world.**
- After the death of a famous and outstanding Christian leader,
- a member of his congregation said...
- **"It never occurred to me that a man like him needed my prayers."**
- Let that never be said of us, for all men need our prayers.
- As **verse 19 emphasize...**

¹⁹ I urge you the more earnestly to do this (PRAY FOR US) in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. (Hebrews 13:19)

- The author is clearly **a leader in the church,**
- and he **needs the prayers of his people** so that he might be restored to them.
- That he might return and continue **his in-person ministry as a spiritual leader.**
- Again, **your Spiritual Leaders (Myself, Brian, the Elders Sean, Gary, Don and Chuck)** covet your prayers that we might be the men God has called and appointed us to be...
- So, I would challenge you as I challenge myself in these **three areas of sacrifice.**
- **First, The Sacrifice of Speech.**
- Use your words to praise God and acknowledge who God is and what he has done in your life.
- Glorify God with your Words.
- **Second, The Sacrifice of Sharing.**
- Use your resources and your life to do good to provide for those who have needs.
- Serve God not Money.
- For this both **pleases and Glorifies God.**
- And finally, **The Sacrifice of Submission**
- Trusting that God has provided you with the **spiritual leaders** you need.
- **And praying that God will continue to work in their lives for his purposes.**
- We must live **in obedience and submission to them as they,**
- by God's power **seek to guide us in the truth of HIS Word.**
- And if we are willing to sacrifice in these areas, it will both Glorify God and be of great advantage to us ALL!
- **Would you pray with me!**