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## HEBREWS

Go Forth to Him

Hebrews 13

- I. The Salt of the Earth
  - a. What is the flavor of faith?
    - i. If it had a flavor what would it taste like? Odd question but I believe there is an answer
    - ii. Following the Beatitudes – a lesson on what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus said - ***Mat 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."***
      1. True Biblical faith is salty. When our hearts and minds are in sync with Jesus and His mission here on earth the world experiences something new, something it hasn't tasted or seen before – a light shines in the darkness
  - b. Isn't that what Hebrews has been about?
    - i. The author starts Hebrews explaining "This is who Jesus is, what He has done, what it means for you"
    - ii. And then he asks that life changing question "Do you believe this?"
      1. This is what life looks like when you truly believe – this is what life looks like when it carries the flavor of faith
      2. Noah built an ark, Abraham left all that he knew, Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea, the walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites marched around them for seven days, believers subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, escaped the edge of the sword, became valiant in battle. Women received their dead raised to life again. >> Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy.
      3. This is salty faith! A faith that a bland, tasteless world cannot ignore.
  - c. Where has the flavor gone? Because the trust is gone the flavor has gone too
    - i. There's very little flavor in the church - we no longer season this flavorless world - we just add more of the same
      1. Instead of sharing the heart and mind of Jesus we share the heart and mind of our culture – when we do that we blend in, there's no flavor
      2. The world doesn't need more of the same – they need Jesus, they need a cloud of witnesses – and that is what this closing chapter of Hebrews is all about – Jesus is better!
      3. ***Luk 14: (33) So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (34) "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? (35) It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"***
- II. Let Brotherly Love Continue
  - a. If the church has lost its flavor, how do we get it back? If I've lost my flavor, how do I get it back?

**Heb 13:1-6 Let brotherly love continue. (2) Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. (3) Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also. (4) Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (5) Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU." (6) So we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"**

- b. Seems like a collection of random thoughts but these thoughts are more connected then they appear - what sets the body of Christ apart from the world?
  - i. Love and holiness - not one or the other – both
  - ii. The church seems to vacillate between the two struggling to find its footing
    - 1. Holiness without love is religion – set of rules and regulations often created by man – self-righteousness
    - 2. Love without a desire for holiness isn't love at all – man's solutions vs God's solutions
- c. Let brotherly love continue
  - i. It's already there, let it continue, let it grow – where do we have opportunities for our love to grow?
  - ii. A man gave the following account...I was walking across the Golden Gate Bridge when I saw a man about to jump off. I tried to dissuade him from committing suicide and told him simply that God loved him. I noticed a tear came to his eye. "Are you a Christian?" I asked. "Yes," he said. "Me too! What a small world. Protestant or Catholic?" "Protestant." "Me too! What denomination?" "Baptist." "Me too!" I said. "Northern Baptist or Southern Baptist?" "Northern Baptist." "Northern Conservative Baptist or Northern Liberal Baptist?" "Northern Conservative Baptist." "Amazing!" I said, "This is incredible! Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist or Northern Conservative Reformed Baptist?" "Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist." "Remarkable! Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region or Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Eastern Region?" "Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region." "This is a miracle!" I said. "Are you Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1879 or are you Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912?" "Northern Conservative Fundamentalist Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912." "Die, you heretic," I said—and pushed him over the rail.
    - 1. We gather with people who look like us and talk like us and act like us and think like us and because of that you have fellowships that are imbalanced and unhealthy
    - 2. It is heartbreaking to see how divided the church is today – don't get me wrong – if you come to me and say there is more than one way to get to heaven and the Word of God is more allegory than it is historical that is a gulf that I can't cross
      - a. That is often not the case and that damages our witness in this world because Jesus said "Every man will know you are my followers by your love for one another."

**(2) Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. (3) Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.**

### III. Love Strangers

- a. Entertain – from the Greek word hospitable - which means fond of guests – be fond of strangers
  - i. In a day and age when we are more isolated then ever we need to strive even harder to engage people we don't know
    - 1. Let's be honest, in a social media drenched society, we are pretty bad at being social

2. satan loves social anxiety, he loves the walls we put up – the walls of prejudice, the walls of insecurity, the walls of busyness and hurry – anything that stands in the way of tangibly getting to know and caring about our neighbor
3. If the enemy can keep us from engaging with others he can prevent the spread of the Good News – what does Paul tell us in ***Romans 10:13-14*** For “***whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.***” But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

***b. Remember the prisoner and those who are mistreated***

- i. These are Christian brothers who are suffering – easy to feel detached from the sufferings of other believers, desensitized by the constant barrage of bad news, the reality is Christians are suffering and dying for their faith everyday – family members thrown in prison and killed for simply loving Jesus
  1. We are to internalize these things as if they are happening to us, we are to put ourselves in their shoes – not just our brothers and sisters in prison for their faith but any Christian who is mistreated or is suffering
  2. Lord – help me to understand their pain because when I do I will have a better understanding of how I can help
- ii. The bond of Christians should be much deeper and stronger than the world’s – the world will stick around in the good times but when things get hard they bail – as Christian’s we are to bear one another’s burdens and in so doing fulfill the law of Christ
  1. Are we getting the message here? We are talking about a counter culture lifestyle here – one that doesn’t fit neatly into any of the world’s carefully crafted boxes

***(4) Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.***

**IV. Treasure Marriage**

- a. Theme of relationships continues - The word for honor more commonly means precious in the New Testament -
  - i. 1 Peter 1:19 Peter refers to the "precious blood" of Jesus,
  - ii. In God's eyes marriage is precious. Marriage is valuable, it's a treasure, it's costly. When we think of marriage we should be gripped by a healthy reverence for it. It is a covenant ordained by God, created by God, that testifies to the world of Christ's love for the church
    1. So how are we doing with that? Is marriage handled carefully or casually? Is it treated like a covenant or a contract? Are our vows sacred or just a suggestion?
- b. I think a big reason the church has lost its flavor and its witness in our culture is because we have lost our reverence for marriage
  - i. We learn from these verses that there are two ways we dishonor marriage and the marriage bed - fornicators and adulterers God will judge, Paul says something similar - 1 Cor 6:9–10 - fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God
  - ii. If you are not married and you engage in any form of sex – that's called fornication (sorry that includes just fantasizing about it), if you are married and you have any form of sex with someone other than your spouse that's called adultery (again, that includes fantasizing about it, watching it, reading it)
    1. For many, this is old fashioned thinking. The idea of abstinence before marriage is absurd.
    2. What a tragedy...that God's wonderful design for His creation is considered absurd.
    3. That is exactly what it means to be the salt of the earth. Different and better
  - iii. God is against you living with your girlfriend and having sex outside of marriage because He has something far better for you.

- c. God is not a kill-joy, He simply hates what kills joy. - fire inside a fireplace warms the home - a fire in the middle of the bedroom floor has the potential to burn the house down
  - i. But church, that message doesn't ring true to the world when it comes from someone who's marriage is in shambles. When salt loses its flavor it loses its impact on the world and gets lost in it.
    - 1. Often Christians are known for what they are against without embracing what God is for.
    - 2. Most people could care less about what you think is wrong unless you can show them something better

***(7) Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.***

***(17) Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. (18) Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. (19) But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner***

#### **V. Leadership in the Body**

- a. Godly leadership is important in the body of Christ, it is a necessary part of the body, but no more important than any other part of the body\
  - i. Peter explains the nature and the role of a leader in ***1Pe 5:1-4 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: (2) Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; (3) nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; (4) and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.***
    - 1. This kind of leadership is beneficial to the body of Christ, it is profitable
  - ii. There is a way we are to treat leadership in the body that will be profitable for all
  - iii. We hear “rule over” and already our skin begins to crawl. We are Americans, and as Americans we love our rights, we love our freedom, we love our individuality – and ain’t nobody gonna tell us what to do!
  - iv. But scripture tells us that some in the body of Christ have been given specific gifts to lead the body of Christ - It is better translated as lead – show the way – to bring along – to carry
    - 1. Rule over – has been taken too far – men in the church have used this to manipulate and control others for their own personal gain
  - v. Calvary Central is not led by perfect people, but it is led by people who love Jesus, who love the Word of God, and who care deeply about your souls
    - 1. It doesn’t mean we have to agree with every decision or like every decision and it doesn’t mean we can’t voice our concerns to our leaders but at the end of the day are we willing to follow their lead for the sake of the body? Ultimately, we are not submitting to them we are submitting to God

#### **II. Established in Grace**

- a. Now let’s jump back up to verse 8

***(8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (9) Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.***

- b. For it is good that the heart be established by grace – established, strengthened, stabilized – comes from the root word steadfast
  - i. What does it mean to have a strong heart? An established heart? A heart that has found firm footing and is not easily moved – a core principal or virtue

- ii. This is a heart that stands firm on the gospel of Grace – who we are at our core has been forever changed by who Jesus is and what He has done – our inner man is gripped by this reality
  - iii. The gospel of Jesus Christ isn't simply one of many principles we live our life by, the gospel is our life – it is the reason we are alive and it is the reason we continue to live
  - iv. That is what it means to have a strong heart – our heart is hidden deeply in the gospel of grace
- c. Here is the author's warning - Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines, specifically teachings about foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.
  - i. We have a tendency to elevate things to a Messiah status in our lives. Where our time, energy, resources, and thought life are consumed by something other than the gospel of grace.
  - ii. The Spiritual mind is preoccupied with the gospel, the carnal mind is preoccupied with absolutely anything and everything else
    - 1. It is dangerous when our interests take on a life-consuming importance, we think about it, we obsess over it, we worry about it – false teaching is a lot more subtle than we think
    - 2. As one author writes – *“The saddest fact is that I search for satisfaction As if I lack it when in fact I lack nothing, That's the reason for my lackluster prayer life And my lust for distractions”*

### III. Food for the Soul

- a. **13) Therefore let us go forth to Him**
  - i. ***(20) Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (21) make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***