

The Epistle to the Hebrews

March 20, 2020

Hebrews 13:1-17

Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16

Acts of Worship

Worship Through Service (vs. 1-4)

As the writer approaches the end of the Book of Hebrews, he wants us to see the importance of a faith that functions for the good of others. Our faith results in our serving God, His church and our brothers and sisters in Christ. We must realize that walking by sight is sinful and it means living with a focus on the world and oneself. Walking by faith is glorious and serves others well and brings glory to God. The question for each of us is, how is it that you can best glorify Christ and serve your church well?

Lock onto this truth as we explore Hebrews this morning. **Genuine Faith: *A true believer serves his/her church well by actively loving Christ and loving others through a lifestyle of worship.***

Canyon Bible offers membership to those seeking a church home. I want to encourage you to be a member because with it comes privileges; both received and outwardly expressed. It is leadership's desire that membership means something. This is why we post on the church website our Statement of Faith and doctrinal statements, so one can know what Canyon Bible believes and where we stand. As leaders, we wish to serve you well and at the same time our desire is that you serve your church well.

The writer of Hebrews begins our passage this morning by showing us how a church is to be functioning well. He defines responsibilities members of Christ's

Church have as His children. As we unpack this scripture, we need to consider what our responsibility is to Christ and to others. These responsibilities are important because if we understand the writer's intention, these not only help us glorify Christ but it helps your fellow church members glorify Christ as well. Did you know that your obedience serves to cause others to be obedient? In the same way, a word of caution, your disobedience can influence others to be disobedient. Community means we are not islands unto ourselves. Our actions have an effect on the whole community. We must understand that our behavior affects others as well as ourselves.

The key to this text is found in the fact that worshipping Christ must happen 24/7; for true believers, the Holy Spirit changes the way one thinks and acts. Faith in Christ is a biblical worldview lived out every day, not just a Sunday morning view. It is a life style of worship; it is not just something that happens Sunday mornings from 10 to 12 noon. If we are to live out the Book of Hebrews, the writer wants us to see how all the truths found in this letter manifest themselves in the living of our lives. This is what the writer is getting at in verses 28 to 29 of chapter 12, ²⁸ *“Therefore (the writer is saying, considering all I have taught you in this letter; therefore, live by faith) Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,* ²⁹ *for our God is a consuming fire.”*

Did you know that when you love others in the name of Christ, you are worshipping Christ? This is not a statement that sounds good but is not really important. This is a real issue if one is to live by faith. We worship Christ by loving those made in His image.

The first exhortation given by the apostle is found in verses 1 to 4, “Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. ⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

We are to love and serve our fellow church members, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to love and serve our wives and husbands. We are to love and serve strangers. Presenting acceptable worship to Christ is to serve others. We are to serve not to garner notice and accolades but because of the joy it brings. If the Lord is to be glorified in our lives, He will be glorified as we love and serve others.

My brother would say, he knew Christianity was not true because of the hypocritical lifestyles of the Christians he knew. To certain extent he is right! One is not just to talk-the-talk of Christianity but walk-the-walk of faith with gratefulness and joy and peace. How many of us have been involved with or have observed churches where the pastor is divorced and remarried and elders and deacons, as leaders, are found to be living in sin? Where leaders want to be elevated above the people God calls them to serve? Husbands who instead of being servant leaders are chauvinistic in their approach to their wives and children. I have also been associated with churches who seem very friendly when you arrive but whose friendliness is really only on the surface. Once the congregation is dismissed the friendliness is over. New people find out quickly that there are clicks within the church and they are hard to break into. True service to others and friendships takes an investment of time and energy, just as does faith.

As believers, we should have a heart attitude that says, I am to love and serve my fellow church members. I am to love and serve strangers. I am to love and serve my wife or husband. When we do these things well Jesus is made more and more famous. The world is watching!

The best way to show love to a stranger is to be hospitable. The best way to show love to those in prison is to visit them. The best way to show love to your wife or husband is to be faithful to them and put their needs first. Notice I said needs not necessarily wants. A husband or wife puts the needs of their spouse first and then the needs of the children and their own last. This is faithful servant leadership. As God gives us guidance in the creation order and then family order this then brings proper church order. A church that is in unity and has a mutual love will be striving to accomplish these most basic important acts of service.

This type of love also has another dimension to it. It shows that one's salvation is real and it shows the world what one really believes as they walk-the-walk of Christian life. As the Apostle John instructed, **“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.”** (1 John 3:14) In the next chapter John continues, ¹⁰ **“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”** (1 John 4:10-12) It is one thing to say, “I love you” but for the Apostle John, love was more than words. He saw love the same way God does; sacrificial, serving and caring action. God wants our love for each other to be tangible. Acts of service show love is real. I have to say how pleasing it is that our church is filled with those who love to serve. We should each ask ourself, “Where is my heart? Do I come to church on Sundays to get all I can and then use what I

receive to serve others throughout the week or do I keep God's blessings for myself?" According to God, love must be practiced and lived out if it is real. In chapter 3 of John's first letter, he gives feet to what love is. He writes, ¹⁶ **"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.** ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

¹⁸ **Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."**

Christ loved us by actively taking action and going to the cross because our greatest need was redemption. A stranger's greatest need is redemption and it often begins by Christ's children showing hospitality. A prisoner's greatest need is redemption and it may be by someone visiting and sharing the gospel. Not a visitor that is going to just say, you need Christ or you will suffer but - one who cares and will invest time. A spouse's greatest need is dependability; of love and service. All of these needs express true love and a servant heart and not only glorifies Christ but shows everyone your love of Christ.

Worship With Contentment (vs. 5-6)

God wants us to be content with our spouses, children, job and the life and the joy of being a servant-Christian. Contentment will allow us to keep our focus on God. Reading verses 5 and 6, **"Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."** ⁶ So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?'" (Quoting Psalm 118:6) If you are going to serve the Lord and others well, another issue is that we are not consumed with a love of money. Money is addictive and can quickly rule over our affections. Money, as well as a number of other things can become an idol and cause us to worship the created world instead

of the Creator. Care must be taken to keep money in its rightful position as a tool to be used to provide for our families and used in service to God's kingdom.

Some find security in money. They think that if their bank account is a certain size then everything will be alright. However, the events of the last few years should go to prove that money can be taken away very quickly. The stock market is volatile and the world political landscape is rapidly changing. The only thing that is unchangeable is God.

Some think that money can buy happiness. They spend and spend in order get the stuff that they think will bring happiness. They believe the latest greatest whatever will bring to their soul inner happiness and fulfillment. However, speaking from experience, it never does. There still remains that empty longing for something else, something true. There is a hole in people's heart and soul that can only be filled by Christ.

The sad part of all this is that by the time everything is bought whether by cash or credit, there remains none left for the church. The means by which you can actively and tangibly love others evaporates because one has spent all they have and then some - trying to make themselves happy. A recent study showed the average American evangelical church-going Christian tithes 1.2% of their income, how sad, what is it they really have faith in? Is it any wonder that several of the cults that give people a false salvation are out performing Christ's church? Oh, the same survey showed the people attending these cults averaged a little over 8%. As sad as this statistic is, I am so pleased we have a church of many faithful givers. God wants us to be content with what we have. He says give Him your first fruits – not your left overs.

If God has given you a home, be content with the one He's given. If you have a car to drive, clothes to wear, and food to eat, be content. This text also has another part to it as well. When we are not content with what God's given, what we really are saying is that we are not content with God Himself. As King David wrote in Psalm 37, a Psalm of trusting God and being content, in verse 16 we read, **“Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked.”**

The Apostle Paul gave up the world to follow Christ and he wrote this advice to his spiritual son, Timothy, **“But godliness with contentment is great gain,** ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation,** into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.** It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” (1 Timothy 6:6-10) Solomon learned the hard way what money can do, **“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.”** (Ecclesiastes 5:10) The Bible speaks a great deal of the temptations of money and sex; God deals with these two sins more than any other temptation. Why? Because these 2 are the temptations that most easily cause His children to fall into sin.

Do you see the trap that is set before us as believers in regard to money? One who loves money will never be happy even if money increases. If you make 1,000 or 10,000 a month or even a 100,000 a month, one can easily spend it all on themselves and not have any left to honor God and to love others. In the end, this worship of money has brought their salvation into question. What does such a person truly worship? There is nothing wrong with money or wealth as long as it is

used in a balanced way. Money is a tool and with great wealth comes greater responsibility to use it in the right way. Money at any amount can become an idol.

I knew a man who owned several pharmacies in my home town who was very well off financially. He was also extremely generous. He gave much of his wealth away. As children of God, living by faith, God will give us what we can handle. This man was able to handle wealth. Before I left my career to serve God in ministry, I made a lot of money and it was a strong temptation in my life. I am so thankful God called me away from that life. I was not content then, but now I am content by my life in God. May you choose to be content with God by living in faithful obedience.

The writer says in verse 6, “So we can confidently say, **‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’**” He is quoting Psalm 118 saying the Lord is the one constant throughout history and with God you are eternally safe.

Worship In Truth (vs. 7-9)

Another way you love others and serve them well is to also love the truth. Why do you attend worship? I pray one of the reasons is that God’s truth is presented and you find yourselves attracted to His truth. Reading verses 7 to 9, “Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.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.” To simplify these verses or to paraphrase them, might go like this; truth leads to grace and grace leads to spiritual

strength and spiritual strength leads to serving through the love received from Christ and you pour that love into others through faith in God's truth.

On the other hand, false teaching leads to false devotion and false devotion leads to emptiness. This is not just experienced in churches that are false or cults like Islam and Mormonism but society in general wants people to worship anything but God. This is why our society experiences so much chaos and pain and emptiness.

As church members of Canyon Bible Church, I pray that as God's truth is preached you grow in your love of truth and love God and love our community of believers and through this love you are strengthened to serve well.

The world is influenced by the evil one and we must guard against new theology. Many churches are coming up with new ideas about God; the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Many churches are adjusting the meaning of scripture. This is how Satan gets Christians to take their focus off of Christ. New ideas about Christ are not good, as verse 8 states, ["Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."](#)

Why do we read the Word of God and apply doctrine each week? Because part of our purpose is to show that what the early church taught about Christ is the same as what the reformers taught and is the same as what we teach. We focus on the Word of God, in the hope you understand God and His Word are eternal and unchanging, and this gives you an internal peace the world finds foreign. If you run into some new novel theology, be very cautious because it is most likely wrong. Just because a preacher interprets God's Word and gives application does not mean he is setting doctrine. But if a preacher changes or applies God's Word incorrectly

it needs to be called out and dealt with. Like Christ, the Word of God or the Bible, “... is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

So, just as God the Father loved His children to the point of sacrificing His Son for the forgiveness of their sins - you are to love your fellow church members by loving the truth. Excitement about truth spreads to others and encourages their love for the same age-old truth. Through God’s Word, both Living and written, together as a community we will grow spiritually strong and this will enable Christ to always be our first love.

Worship With Love (vs. 10-16)

Jesus has shown us the greatest example of unselfish extravagant love that is possible – love that is beyond you and me. When He went outside that camp and endured the cross and suffered for His people, He was loving us with every fiber of His being. Loving others, for Jesus, may mean experiencing pain and suffering. Our greatest need was met by Christ and it required suffering. Reading at verse 10, “We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. 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. 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. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Sometimes if we are to love others it will require suffering and broken hearts and being taken advantage of and being abused and used. But you know what, that

is ok. Loving others has a cost, just like Jesus loving you enough to pay for your sins. We are commanded in this text to go outside the camp like Jesus did and bear, at times, similar reproach. We are to go outside the safety of the church to share Christ with the lost and do this in love.

The camp was a place of safety and security. The church could be for us our comfort zone. The writer is saying and God is instructing, go outside and take a chance. Live by faith and not by safety. What is it Christ has for you? What would going outside the camp look like for you?

Worship In Submission (v. 17)

Finally, you can love others as you lovingly submit to your leaders. Reading verse 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.”](#) Our passage today began with, [“Let brotherly love continue.”](#) Serving and submission both need to be founded in love for Christ and others.

Let your submission continue. You are a pleasure to me as your pastor. There is no sides being taken and no axes grinding. That is the Lord working as I speak into your life. I humbly ask that you serve and love others by submitting to the leadership of our church. Unless we ask you to sin in some way, continue to give us the benefit of the doubt and allow us the privilege of leading you. Nothing we do here is done flying by the seat of our pants so to speak. Everything is slow and deliberate. We are the ones who will someday give an account to God for your soul’s condition. God has placed me as the steward of your soul and so with fear and trembling I am leading you the best I can to grow closer to Christ. If you are

lost, I pray that the Lord would save you and bring you closer to Himself. If you are already a believer, I pray that the Lord would draw you even closer to Himself.

This morning I have presented to you several things that if you submit to will help in bringing you closer to Jesus. I pray you will continue to submit. Your submission is loving Christ and loving others, because your submission will encourage others to submit as well. God is saying through His prophet, “[Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.](#)” As you live in the love of God and service to your brothers and sisters and submission to leadership; you will have the great advantage of a joyous pastor and leaders. This will be a great benefit to you.

The key principle in all these acts of service is, ***Genuine Faith is expressed as a true believer serves his/her church well by actively loving Christ and loving others through a lifestyle of worship.***

The writer says we are to love others by serving:

- Being hospitable to strangers
- Visiting those in prison
- Being faithful to your spouse
- Being content with what you have and do not love money
- Loving God’s truth
- Loving Christ
- Submitting to the church leaders

May the Lord be gracious to us as we grow as a church spiritually through loving our Lord. Amen!