

A STUDY IN HEBREWS

week 12: Hebrews 13

A couple weeks ago, we hit a turning point in Hebrews, where the author went from making large, theological points to pleading with the reader to embrace some very practical advice given by the author. This week, as we study Hebrews 13, it can almost seem like the message someone would send if their cell phone battery was about to die. Yet, we will see how the author is summing up many of the major points made in the book, and leaving the reader with some final yet lasting challenges.

READ: HEBREWS 12:28-29

When this letter was originally written, the author would have moved right from this line to Hebrews 13:1- there would have been no separation of the thoughts. Why is this idea important as we think of what it looks like to receive very practical advice on how to live out our faith?

What do all of these instructions have in common?

What are some ways we can show hospitality to strangers?

What does it look like in 21st Century America to love different groups of people who might resemble some of the categories listed by the author?

What can we learn from v2 about angels? What does this tell us about how God is working in the world?

READ: HEBREWS 13:4-6

What do keeping the marriage bed pure and keeping ourselves from the love of money have in common?

Why do you think the author chose those particular issues (sex and money) to mention specifically?

Clearly, keeping our heart in a pure state is part of what following Jesus is all about. Why is it important to remember God's promise that "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you?"

READ: HEBREWS 13:7-8, 17-18

This might seem like a strange shift in the narrative, but many theologians agree that these verses tell us about something about this community of believers. Considering how in chapter 10, the author reminds this group of believers not to forsake the gathering of believers, and now combining this encouragement to honor their leaders, it seems clear that this group had separated themselves from the larger church body they had belonged to.

Why does it matter to remain part of a larger body of believers? Why does it matter to honor the leaders God has placed over us?

As independent Americans, we might not resonate with these verses. What do these verses reveal about God's kingdom that might challenge some of the cultural ideals we have been raised with?

READ: HEBREWS 13:9-16

These can seem like very strange thoughts for the writer to add here, but this actually sums up many of the things that have been unfolded in Hebrews.

How can someone avoid falling for strange or false teachings?

How do verses 11-13 underscore what we have read about Jesus being our great high priest in chapter 5, and his sacrifice being once and for all in chapter 10?

What is the city that is to come, spoken of in v14? How can we look for it?

What sacrifices are pleasing to God?

As we finish out the Hebrews series, the hope is that all of us have gained a deeper appreciation for who Jesus is, and the work that He accomplished on the cross. The hope is that we see how Jesus is far greater than anything else that this world has to offer, and that in Him, all of the requirements of God's standards have been fulfilled. Because of Jesus, we can have full assurance that we have been made righteous and will inherit eternal life in Him.

Now, as a prayer of benediction either over yourself or as a group, read Hebrews 13:20-21