

Hebrews 13 Sermon Illustrations

HEBREWS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS OUR DAILY BREAD, et. al.

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- Hebrews 1-4 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 5-8 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 9-10 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 11 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 12 Sermon Illustrations
- Hebrews 13 Sermon Illustrations

Hebrews 13:1-2 LOVE OF HOSPITALITY

OUR TEXT refers to that memorable scene when Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent, probably inclined to slumber in the heat of noon. Suddenly he saw three men apparently waiting for alms and help. Plenty of travellers had come to his door before, seeking help and hospitality which he had given freely. But though the heat was great, though he may have been disappointed again and again in the recipients of his bounty, he felt it better to be disappointed a hundred times than to miss the chance of showing hospitality and welcome. Therefore he sprang to his feet, called to Sarah for help, and the two of them quickly ministered to the three unknown men. How thankful he must have been that he had not refused to entertain them, for two of them were angels, and the third was the Son of God!

In our crowded lives, where room is scarce, it is less easy for us to care for the people who may be cast as strangers amongst us, but there is a hospitality of the mind that we can all exercise, when we open our hearts to some story of sorrow. None of us are quite aware, except we have suffered in that way, how much it helps some people to be able to pour out their burdens and sorrows. It is much to have a hospitable mind, to have a sympathetic ear, and to make room in our heart for the story of human pain, sorrow, and loneliness, which some, who are comparative strangers, may want to confide in us. We may rebuke ourselves that our hearts do not more nearly represent the hostel or inn into which sad or weary souls may creep for shelter. Although you cannot say much, there may always be the open door of your heart where the lonely and desolate may enter and find in you a fire of sympathy, kindness, and good-will.

Thus cold hands may find warmth, and souls that are frozen for want of love and sympathy may be sheltered and refreshed, and we shall find that in showing love to a stranger we have been ministering to our dear Lord Himself, who said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me."

PRAYER - Help me, Blessed Lord, to bear the infirmities of the weak, to succour those that are over-borne in the fight of life, and to bear the burdens of others. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 13:2

God's Love On A Plate

During His life on earth, Jesus chose to identify with poor and destitute people. He lived as one who had no place to call home (Mt. 8:20), and His ministry was marked by compassion for the needy.

In her book Hidden Art, Edith Schaeffer of L'Abri Fellowship tells of feeding the occasional vagrant who would stop at her back door and ask, "May I have a cup of coffee, ma'am, and maybe some bread?"

Edith would invite him to sit down, then go in to prepare a tray of food fit for a king: steaming soup and thick sandwiches, cut and arranged artfully on a plate with garnishes. The children would make a tiny bouquet, and if it was dusk, add a candle.

In amazement the man would gasp, "For me?" "Yes," Edith would answer, "and coffee will be ready in a minute. This Gospel of John is for you too. Take it with you. It really is very important."

In my kitchen hangs this saying: "Food is God's love made edible." Certainly those vagrants at Edith's door experienced God's love through her and her family.

How about serving up God's love to someone? Through your generosity you will be serving Christ--and perhaps, you may be serving an angel in disguise (Heb. 13:2). --JEY

Love is giving for the world's needs,

Love is sharing as the Spirit leads,

Love is caring when the world cries,

Love is compassion with Christlike eyes. --Brandt

Food is God's love made edible

Hebrews 13:5

Souls And Wallets

The book of Hebrews strikes a strange note for men and women living with the values of the 21st century. "Let your conduct be without covetousness," the writer urged, and "be content with such things as you have" (13:5). He wasn't saying that having money is a sin, but it can be a problem. Our world has bought into the myth that riches and contentment go together, that they're almost the same thing. Yet, many wealthy people who boast large bank accounts are not content. They always want more, and they live in dread that they will lose what they have.

"Be content with such things as you have." Well, what do you have? Do you immediately think of what's in your savings account or stock portfolio? You are looking in the wrong place. The writer of Hebrews said that if you live with faith in the Lord of eternity, you have Him. He has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (13:5). You have Him, so you can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (v.6).

If you have everything else but the Lord, you don't have much at all. If you have the Lord's presence and little else, you can be content. Better to have a satisfied soul than a thick wallet. —HWR —Haddon W. Robinson

O Lord, help us to be content

With all that we possess,

And may we show our gratitude

With heartfelt thankfulness. —Sper

Contentment is priceless.

Hebrews 13:5

Loneliness

From time to time, lonely people call me to share their problems. One man, who professes faith in Christ, is struggling to live a pure life. Whenever he falls into sin, he needs reassurance of God's forgiveness.

Another person who calls is a woman who has had some bad experiences with men. She has to be assured that God still loves her.

Then there's a young woman with a physical disability. She lives alone because she is treated badly at home.

All these people have two things in common: they've felt the pain of rejection, and they are lonely. But it's loneliness that stands out as their greatest problem.

Loneliness can't be cured just by being with people, seeing a counselor, or talking on the phone. What's needed is friendship. That's where we who are not lonely can help. We must befriend lonely people.

Just waiting for someone to become a friend, however, is not the way to find the cure for loneliness. Hebrews 13:1-6 does not mention this problem, but it does give the answer. We must focus our attention on Jesus Christ. He promises to be a helper who will never leave nor forsake us (vv. 5-6).

Jesus always listens and always cares. He will help you make it through any situation.-- Herbert Vander Lugt

When solitude's burden would weigh down the soul

And feelings of loneliness o'er us would roll,
The Savior continues to stay by our side
To strengthen, to comfort, to help, and to guide.-- Dennis J. De Haan
Jesus cares.

Hebrews 13:5

Who Holds The Rope?

Some years ago I read an account that went something like this:

A group of scientists and botanists were exploring remote regions of the Alps in search of new species of flowers. One day they noticed through binoculars a flower of such rarity and beauty that its value to science was incalculable. But it lay deep in a ravine with cliffs on both sides. To get the flower someone had to be lowered over the cliff on a rope.

A curious young boy was watching nearby, and the scientists told him they would pay him well if he would agree to be lowered over the cliff to retrieve the flower below.

The boy took one long look down the steep, dizzy depths and said, "I'll be back in a minute." A short time later he returned, followed by a gray-haired man. Approaching the botanist, the boy said, "I'll go over that cliff and get that flower for you if this man holds the rope. He's my dad."

Oh, that God might give us the faith of that boy! Have you learned to trust the Lord like that, my friend? If anyone else holds the rope, I dare not go. But since Jesus is holding me fast, I can never doubt. Are you willing to say, "If my Father holds the rope, I shall not fear"? --M. R. De Haan

He holds my hand, this wonderful Savior,
And He is mine;
So why should I fear when I know He's so near,
And I know that His hand holds mine? --Smith
Fear fades when we trust our Father.

Hebrews 13:5

A Friend To The End

Traditionally, medical schools have trained their students to help patients live, while offering little instruction in helping them face death. But that is changing with the addition of courses in end-of-life care. Physicians are now taught that when they have used all their medical expertise without achieving a cure, they should seize the opportunity to stand compassionately beside their dying patients and be a friend.

Death frightens many of us and makes us feel awkward in the presence of a terminally ill person. But our greatest opportunities to help someone in Jesus' name may come during a person's final days on earth.

The Bible speaks of a friendship that knows no limits. "A friend loves at all times," said the wise man (Proverbs 17:17). And "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (18:24). Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Jesus is both our Great Physician and our Friend, and He promised that He would never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He calls us to stand with our friends and family in His name as their earthly journey nears its end. That's what a true friend would do. — David C. McCasland

A friend is he who always knows
When the cold wind of trouble blows,
Who comes in dark and stormy night
With friendship's glowing lamp alight. —Mason

A true friend stays true to the end.

Hebrews 13:5

You Are Never Alone

Jesus is just as real today as He was when He walked on this earth. Even though He doesn't move among us physically, by the Holy Spirit He is here, there, everywhere—a continuous, living presence—outside of us and inside of us.

That may be a terrifying thought for some. Perhaps you don't like yourself, or you're contemplating all the bad things you've done. Insecurity and sin can create a sense of fear, awkwardness, and clumsiness in Jesus' presence. But think of what you know about Him.

Despite what you are or what you may have done, He loves you (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:7-11). He will never leave you nor forsake you (John 14:18; Hebrews 13:5). Others may not think much of you or invite you to spend time with them, but Jesus does (Matthew 11:28). Others may not like the way you look, but He looks at your heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Luke 24:38). Others may think you're a bother because you're old and in the way, but He will love you to the end (Romans 8:35-39).

Jesus loves you in spite of all the conditions that cause others to turn away. He wants to change you to be like Him, but He loves you as you are and will never abandon you. You are family; you will never, ever be alone. —David H. Roper

Jesus shares your worries and cares

You'll never be left all alone,

For He stands beside you to comfort and guide you,

He always looks out for His own. —Brandt

If you know Jesus, you'll never walk alone.

Hebrews 13:5

And It Was So

The words are repeated several times in Genesis 1, the story of creation: "And it was so."

Whatever God said—it happened. "Let there be light ... Let there be a firmament ... Let the earth bring forth grass ... " Then, each time, the words: "And it was so." God spoke the words, and it became a reality.

As I read about this beginning of our world and the power of God, I started to think about some other things God and His Son Jesus have said—things we can count on.

When Jesus was talking about His followers, He said, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28). If we have put our trust in Him, we can be assured that we have eternal life right now and will live with Him forever.

The writer to the Hebrews said, "Be content with such things as you have. For [God] Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). We can be sure that our needs will be met and that we won't be left alone.

One of Jesus' most comforting promises is "I will come again and receive you to Myself" (John 14:3). He said it; we can believe it and wait confidently for that day.

Count on God's word. It will be so.—Anne Cetas

No matter what may come to pass,

God's precious Word still stands,

This universe is held intact

Within His mighty hands. -Williams

God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

Hebrews 13:5

Strange Territory

When my son Stephen was 8, he was invited to stay overnight at a cousin's house. It was his first time away from home and it all sounded like an exciting adventure. But when my wife and I took him there, he started getting that homesick feeling. With tears glistening in his eyes and his voice quivering, he said, "Mommy, I don't feel so good. I'd better go home with you."

My wife responded, "It's up to you, but I know you'd have a good time."

"But Mommy," Stephen whimpered, "they said they were going to climb a big hill tomorrow, and I've never been there before!"

We too can become fearful sometimes as we look ahead, because we've "never been there before." But just as the Lord took care of Joshua and Israel (Joshua 3), He will take care of us.

Perhaps right now you are anxious about some new and untried pathway on which the Lord is leading you. Then listen to God's Word and take courage: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psalm 23:1,3).

Place your hand by faith in your heavenly Father's hand, and let Him lead the way. —Richard De Haan

God does not ask us to go where He does not lead.

Hebrews 13:5

What Do You Fear?

One of Grimm's fairy tales is about a rather dimwitted young man who didn't understand what it meant to shudder in fear. People attempted to shock him by putting him in all sorts of terrifying situations—but to no avail. He finally did shudder, though not out of fear. He was asleep when someone poured a bucket of cold water and wiggling fish on top of him.

Something is wrong with us if we're never afraid. Fear is the natural human reaction to any difficult or dangerous undertaking, and God doesn't condemn it. Neither does He want us to be crippled by fear. Jesus' words to His disciples on more than one occasion were, "Do not be afraid" (Luke 5:10; 12:4; John 6:20). In each case He used a verb tense that suggests continuance. In other words, He told them, "Don't keep on fearing."

We need not be overcome by our fear, nor should we ever say no to doing what we know God wants us to do merely because we are fearful. God can turn our fear into fortitude. We can trust God and "not be afraid" (Psalm 56:11).

Courage is not the absence of fear but the mastery of it. So let's resist our fear and meet it with faith in our Lord, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). —David H. Roper

Do not fear the darkness that is gathering all around,

For the Lord is with you, and in Him true peace is found;

When you're facing trouble, or when tragedy seems near,

Jesus is the only one to drive away your fear. —Hess

We can face any fear when we know the Lord is near

Hebrews 13:5

God's Astonishing Promise

The writer to the Hebrews quotes God as saying to His people, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). How does that strike you? Is it just some pleasant piety that evokes a wide yawn?

This isn't like saying we have coffee with the President or a Supreme Court justice. Knowing people like that would say something significant about us. But to claim that God is with us every moment of every day, as close as our skin, in every turn of life, tear-stained or drenched in smiles—some would say that borders on insanity.

Yet throughout history men and women have staked their lives on that truth. Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Joshua, David, Esther, just to name a few. The promise was true for them, but how can we know it's true for us?

It is true for us because of Jesus. By His coming, He says, "I want to be with you; I gave Myself to you; I gave Myself for you. Do you really think I would ever forsake you?"

How do you respond to this astonishing promise? Say it's too good to be true. Say it sounds unbelievable. But don't ignore it. In your hurts, your fears, your struggles, your temptations, there is no more wonderful promise than this: "I will never leave you nor forsake you."—Haddon W. Robinson

Though all around is darkness,

Earthly joys have flown;

My Savior whispers His promise

Never to leave me alone. —Anon.

No matter where you go, God goes with you.

Hebrews 13:5

Never Alone

Robinson Crusoe, the chief character in a novel by Daniel Defoe, was shipwrecked and stranded on an uninhabited island. Life was hard, but he found hope and comfort when he turned to the Word of God.

Crusoe said, "One morning, being very sad, I opened the Bible upon these words, 'I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Immediately it occurred that these words were to me; why else should they be directed in such a manner, just at the moment when I was mourning over my condition, as one forsaken of God and man?"

"'Well then,' said I, 'if God does not forsake me, ... what matters it, though the world should all forsake me ... ?' From this moment I began to conclude in my mind that it was possible for me to be more happy in this forsaken, solitary condition than it was probable that I should ever have been in any other state in the world; and with this thought I was going to give thanks to God for bringing me to this place."

Have you been forsaken by a friend, a child, a spouse? God has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). So you too can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (v.6). —David H. Roper

When all around me is darkness

And earthly joys have flown,

My Savior whispers His promise

Never to leave me alone. —Anon.

Fear will leave us when we remember that God is always with us.

Hebrews 13:5

God's Answer To Loneliness

Most of us have experienced loneliness in some form or another. I remember the deep sense of aloneness that swept over me during my first day in the military when I was exposed to almost constant cursing and foul language.

People with physical disabilities have said that their greatest pain is loneliness. It is also felt by parents who have been neglected by their children, by husbands or wives who have lost their mate, and by people from a minority group who have been excluded from social activities.

If we want to be followers of our Savior, we should be reaching out to the lonely all around us. But we can't be with them all the time, nor can we fully know their pain. Our presence may help, but we are never enough. Only God can meet the needs of the lonely. And here is the good news. In Jesus He has revealed Himself as "Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

One day G. Campbell Morgan visited an elderly woman who lived alone. Before leaving, he read, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "A great promise," he said. With a twinkle in her eye she retorted, "Dr. Morgan, that's not a promise. It's reality!" For her, Immanuel was the ultimate cure for loneliness. —HVL —Herbert Vander Lugt

Though all around me is darkness

And earthly joys have flown,

My Savior whispers His promise—

Never to leave me alone. —Anon.

Hebrews 13:5

Yesterday And Tomorrow

On New Year's Eve 1916, a chaplain spoke to a gathering of British Commonwealth soldiers in Cairo, Egypt. Standing before men whose lives had been turned upside down by World War I, Oswald Chambers talked to them about yesterday and tomorrow.

Chambers said, "At the end of the year we turn with eagerness to all that God has for the future, and yet anxiety is apt to arise from remembering the yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God's grace is apt to be checked by the memory of yesterday's sins and blunders. But God is the God of our yesterdays, and He allows the memory of them in order to turn the past into a ministry of spiritual culture for the future. God reminds us of the past lest we get into a shallow security in the present... Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ. Leave the irreparable past in His hands, and step out into the irresistible future with Him" (My Utmost For His Highest).

God promised Israel, "The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (Isaiah 52:12). We too can take comfort in knowing that our God will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

As we begin a new year, we can place ourselves—and all our yesterdays and tomorrows—safely in His care. —D C M

Excerpt from My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers, © Renewal 1963 Oswald Chambers Publication Association, Ltd. — David C. McCasland

Not yesterday's load we are called on to bear,

Nor the morrow's uncertain and shadowy care;

Why should we look forward or back with dismay?

Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day. —Flint

© 1944 Evangelical Publishers

If you walk with God today, you can be confident about tomorrow.

Hebrews 13:5

OUR RESOURCES

SUCH THINGS as ye have, plus! The Greek literally means that there is within us an undeveloped power only awaiting the call, and there will be enough. I may be speaking to people who wish that they had more money, or more brains, or more influence. They dream of the lives they would live, of the deeds they would do, if only they were better circumstanced. But God says No! You have present within the narrow confines of your own reach the qualities that the world is wanting. Use them, and be content with the things that you have. You have never explored the resources of your own soul.

"Such things as ye have"--Moses had only a rod, but a rod with God can open the Red Sea. David had only five pebbles, but these with God brought down Goliath. The woman had only a little pot of oil, but that pot of oil with God paid all her debts. The poor widow was scraping the bottom of the barrel, but with God the handful of meal kept her child, herself, and the prophet until the rain came. The boy had only five tiny loaves and two small fish, but with Jesus they were enough for five thousand men, beside women and children. EstiMatte what you have got, and then count God into the bargain! He never lets go your hand. He will never leave nor forsake those that trust in Him!

Therefore be content! The most glorious deeds that have blessed and enriched the world have not been done by wealthy men. Our Lord had none of this world's goods; the apostles had neither silver nor gold; Carey was only a poor cobbler; Bunyan a travelling tinker; Wesley left two silver spoons. It is not money, but human love and God that is needed. Therefore do not be covetous; do not hoard, but give! Be strong and content. With good courage say: "The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear"--for life or death, for sorrow or joy!

PRAYER

The soul that to Jesus has fled for repose,

He cannot, He will not, desert to its foes.

That soul, though all hell should endeavour to take,

He'll never, no never, no never forsake! AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 13:5

Morning and evening : Daily readings (February 21 AM)

If we can only grasp these words by faith, we have an all-conquering weapon in our hand. What doubt will not be slain by this two-edged sword? What fear is there which shall not fall smitten with a deadly wound before this arrow from the bow of God's covenant? Will not the distresses of life and the pangs of death; will not the corruptions within, and the snares without; will not the trials from above, and the temptations from beneath, all seem but light afflictions, when we can hide ourselves beneath the bulwark of "He hath said"? Yes; whether for delight in our quietude, or for strength in our conflict, "He hath said" must be our daily resort. And this may teach us the extreme value of searching the Scriptures. There may be a promise in the Word which would exactly fit your case, but you may not know of it, and therefore you miss its comfort.

You are like prisoners in a dungeon, and there may be one key in the bunch which would unlock the door, and you might be free; but if you will not look for it, you may remain a prisoner still, though liberty is so near at hand. There may be a potent medicine in the great pharmacopoeia of Scripture, and you may yet continue sick unless you will examine and search the Scriptures to discover what "He hath said." Should you not, besides reading the Bible, store your memories richly with the promises of God? You can recollect the sayings of great men; you treasure up the verses of renowned poets; ought you not to be profound in your knowledge of the words of God, so that you may be able to quote them readily when you would solve a difficulty, or overthrow a doubt? Since "He hath said" is the source of all wisdom, and the fountain of all comfort, let it dwell in you richly, as "A well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." So shall you grow healthy, strong, and happy in the divine life. (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 13:5

Morning and evening : Daily readings (February 23 AM)

No promise is of private interpretation. Whatever God has said to any one saint, he has said to all. When he opens a well for one, it is that all may drink. When he openeth a granary-door to give out food, there may be some one starving man who is the occasion of its being opened, but all hungry saints may come and feed too. Whether he gave the word to Abraham or to Moses, matters not, O believer; he has given it to thee as one of the covenanted seed. There is not a high blessing too lofty for thee, nor a wide mercy too extensive for thee. Lift up now thine eyes to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, for all this is thine. Climb to Pisgah's top, and view the utmost limit of the divine promise, for the land is all thine own. There is not a brook of living water of which thou mayst not drink. If the land floweth with milk and honey, eat the honey and drink the milk, for both are thine. Be thou bold to believe, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." In this promise, God gives to his people everything. "I will never leave thee." Then no attribute of God can cease to be engaged for us. Is he mighty? He will show himself strong on the behalf of them that trust him. Is he love? Then with lovingkindness will he have mercy upon us. Whatever attributes may compose the character of Deity, every one of them to its fullest extent shall be engaged on our side. To put everything in one, there is nothing you can want, there is nothing you can ask for, there is nothing you can need in time or in eternity, there is nothing living, nothing dying, there is nothing in this world, nothing in the next world, there is nothing now, nothing at the resurrection-morning, nothing in heaven which is not contained in this text—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 13:5

Absolute Assurance

SEVERAL times in the Scriptures the Lord hath said this. He has often repeated it to make our assurance doubly sure. Let us never harbor a doubt of it. In itself the promise is specially emphatic. In the Greek it has five negatives, each one definitely shutting out the possibility of the Lord's ever leaving one of His people so that he can justly feel forsaken of his God. This priceless Scripture does not promise us exemption from trouble, but it does secure us against desertion. We may be called to traverse strange ways, but we shall always have our Lord's company, assistance, and provision. We need not covet money, for we shall always have our God, and God is better than gold. His favor is better than fortune.

We ought surely to be content with such things as we have, for he who has God has more than all the world besides. What can we have beyond the Infinite? What more can we desire than Almighty Goodness.

Come, my heart; if God says He will never leave thee nor forsake thee, be thou much in prayer for grace, that thou mayest never leave thy Lord, nor even for a moment forsake His ways. (Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook.)

Hebrews 13:5-6

Lifetime Guarantee

Three years ago I bought a suitcase with a lifetime guarantee. "We don't care who breaks it," the manufacturer said, "we'll repair or replace it free—forever." To its credit, the company repaired it twice, just as promised. But a few weeks ago I learned that the business had filed for bankruptcy and its future was in doubt. If the company goes under, so does the guarantee.

In a world where we can't always depend on guarantees, there is one promise we can trust. Throughout Scripture we find the Lord's pledge to be with His people. In Deuteronomy 31 we read Moses' assuring words to Joshua: "The Lord ... will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed" (v.8).

This promise is repeated in the New Testament: "He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:5-6). The promise of God's unfailing presence with us is the key to living with confidence and contentment.

No matter how many pledges are broken by people, God's promises will last through all time and eternity. Because He is eternal, He can give us an eternal guarantee. —DCM —David C. McCasland

Sweetest of all life's blessings,

Communion with Christ above,

Assurance of His presence,

His matchless, eternal love. —Anon.

Every promise of God comes with an eternal guarantee.

Hebrews 13:6

Fear Only God

BECAUSE God will never leave nor forsake us, we may well be content with such things as we have. Since the Lord is ours, we cannot be left without a friend, a treasure, and a dwelling place. This assurance may make us feel quite independent of men. Under such high patronage, we do not feel tempted to cringe before our fellow men and ask of them permission to call our lives our own; but what we say, we boldly say and defy contradiction.

He who fears God has nothing else to fear. We should stand in such awe of the living Lord that all the threats that can be used by the proudest persecutor should have no more effect upon us than the whistling of the wind. Man in these days cannot do so much against us as he could when the apostle wrote the verse at the head of this page. Racks and stakes are out of fashion. Giant Pope cannot burn the pilgrims now. If the followers of false teachers try cruel mockery and scorn, we do not wonder at it, for the men of this world cannot love the heavenly seed. What then? We must bear the world's scorn. It breaks no bones. God helping us, let us be bold; and when the world rages let it rage, but let us not fear it. (Spurgeon, C. Faith's Checkbook)

Hebrews 13:8

Tomorrow's Terrors

Peter Marshall, whose dynamic preaching attracted crowds of people, died suddenly on the morning of January 25, 1949, at the age of 46. In one of his sermons he had said: "When the clock strikes for me, I shall go, not one minute early, and not one minute late. Until then, there is nothing to fear. I know that the promises of God are true, for they have been fulfilled in my life time and time again. Jesus still teaches and guides and protects and heals and comforts, and still wins our complete trust and our love."

Do you and I share that same fear-dispelling conviction? Can each of us, like David, say to our Lord, "My times are in Your hand"? (Psalm 31:15). Are we confident that God holds us in His almighty hands? Can we boldly say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6).

True, we may have concern about the days ahead. As Scripture reminds us, we "do not know what will happen tomorrow" (James 4:14). But we do know that whatever happens He will always be with us (Hebrews 13:5). That knowledge can lighten any burden of worry about the future.

Some anxiety about the process of dying is normal. Yet, by the grace of God and by the comfort of His Spirit, we can face tomorrow's terrors with courage. —VCG —Vernon C Grounds

I don't know about tomorrow,
Nor what coming days will bring;
But I know my Lord is with me,
And His praise my heart will sing. —Fitzhugh

Worry can do a lot of things to you; prayer can do a lot of things for you.

Hebrews 13:8

Our Changing World

Change is one thing we can be sure of in this life. Our relationships change as we move to new places, experience illness, and ultimately face death. Even the cells in our bodies are always in the process of change. When cells wear out, most are replaced by new ones. This is especially noticeable with our skin—we shed and regrow outer skin cells about every 27 days.

Yes, change is the one certainty in our world. Henry Lyte's melancholy line in his hymn "Abide With Me" is true: "Change and decay in all around I see." But the hymn immediately adds, "O Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

By faith in Jesus Christ we can have a relationship with the unchanging God, who says of Himself in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I do not change." We can depend on God to be the same forever, as the psalmist says (Psalm 102:27). Hebrews 13:8 adds this reassuring testimony: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He is our firm foundation, who can give us confidence and security in this changing world.

We creatures, caught up in the swirling tide of time, can rest our souls on the everlasting arms, which will never let us go.—Vernon C Grounds

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see—
O Thou who changest not, abide with me! —Lyte

To face life's changes, look to the unchanging God.

A New Year's Address James Smith, New Park Street Church, London, 1849

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!" Hebrews 13:8

Everything around us is changing and fast passing away! Nothing appears settled or secure! The old year has fled and has told its tale; a new year begins today and will introduce mercies and trials, comforts and distresses, darkness and light. Who can tell what is folded up in the bosom of this year?

Could we look through the coming hours, days, weeks, and months of this year; could we count the head-aches and the heart-aches which await us; the disappointments we shall meet, the vexations we shall experience, the distresses we must pass through—our hearts would perhaps be wrung with anguish, and our minds be clouded with gloom! But these are wisely concealed from our view, and whatever may be our anticipations or forebodings, the Lord meets us on the threshold of this year and assures us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!" This is our encouragement, beloved friends.

God himself in pity and compassion gives us this sweet, cheering, and animating assurance. Could Jesus change, then we might sink into gloom, despondency, and despair! Creatures may change, and do change for the worse instead of the better—but Jesus is the same. It is impossible that he should be better—for he is altogether perfect. And being perfect—he can never change for the worse. He embodies everything that is amiable, glorious, and inviting in deity; and everything that is excellent, admirable, and sweet in humanity. He blends the attributes of God—and the perfections of man in his sacred character. He is at once our Brother—and our God; our Maker—and our Fellow; our Lord—and our Husband. O admirable mystery! O encouraging connection! O delightful truth!

Brethren, what have the Lord's people found Jesus to be in bygone days? That, all that—is Jesus NOW. Yes, this new year's morning he has all that love, kindness, tenderness, pity, compassion, verity, and majesty—which his people in every age have proved him to possess. He who sympathized with the widow of Nain, who had compassion on the hungry multitude, and wept with the sisters of departed Lazarus—is just the same now—as then. He has the same nature, the same heart, and the same fellow

feeling.

True we have not the same visible expressions of his tenderness and pity—but they are nevertheless real; he is the same today as he was yesterday, and will be the same forever. We have the same Jesus to deal with—as had the Syrophenician woman, the adulteress at Jacob's well, or the thief upon the cross. He is deeply interested in our welfare, lovingly concerned to do us good, and ready to help us in every time of trouble.

- His ear is at every believer's heart—listening to the voice of his sighs, groans, and desires.
- His eye is observant of the Christian's goings, and marks every step he takes.
- His hand is stretched out to help him in every time of trial, or circumstance of difficulty.
- His affections yearn over him with indescribable affection and pity in every affliction or trouble.
- He loves us dearly.
- He knows our frame.
- He considers our circumstances.
- He pities our weaknesses.
- He watches our movements.
- He orders our steps.
- He instructs our minds.
- He subdues our sins.
- He frustrates our enemies.
- He will never for one moment leave us, nor on any account forsake us!

No, he will never turn away from doing of us good—but will rejoice over us to do us good with his whole heart, and with his whole soul. Jesus is the same. He is one with us, has suffered like us, and knows by experience what our temptations, trials, and distresses are! He is no stranger to a troubled heart, a pained body, or the distress occasioned by the loss of the divine presence, he has passed through the whole. Therefore my poor, tried, tempted, and distressed brother, or sister in the Lord, learn to look to Jesus—as Jesus—as one touched with the feeling of your infirmities. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are!"

We are apt to think the Lord changes—when his dispensations change. But no! The change of his dispensations proceeds from the immutability of his purpose respecting us, and his love to us. He is determined to bless us indeed, and this being the case—he must empty us from vessel to vessel, and change his dealings according to the state of our hearts, our enemies, or our temptations. Our immutable Jesus always pursues one steady course, and has one gracious design towards us—all must work to produce our sanctification, and eternal salvation.

The Lord Jesus will not indulge us—when indulgence will harm us. He will only correct us—when correction will do us good. His infinite wisdom devises our way, and inconceivable love directs our steps. Creatures, providences, experiences may change—but Jesus is the same!

- His heart is as tender,
- His eye is as penetrating,
- His ear is as attentive,
- His arm is as powerful,
- His presence is as near,
- His name is as sweet,
- His blood is as efficacious,
- His righteousness is as glorious,
- His promises are as certain,
- His oath is as sure,
- His throne is as accessible,
- His love is as great,
- His concern for us is as deep,
- His intercession is as prevalent
- —as it ever was! And will be so through every week, day, hour—yes, minute of the present year! May we always keep this in remembrance!

Beloved, you must trust no one, depend on no one, look to no source either for peace, comfort, or supply, through this year—but Jesus! He is willing and waiting to supply all your needs, according to his glorious riches! Soul needs, body needs, family needs,

church needs; needs in sickness, needs in health; needs at home, needs abroad; needs while living, needs when dying—Jesus can, will, yes wishes to supply them all.

He will keep his seat on the throne of grace throughout the whole of the year! You will never find him absent for any one moment, or so engaged—that he cannot attend to you. He will always be pleased to see you come, and will at all times consider your case. But you must go to him first—be sure you remember this, for he has a jealous eye!

- You must go to him alone,
- you must go to him for all,
- you must go to him frequently,
- you must go to him perseveringly,
- and as sure as his name is Jesus—you shall not go in vain!

I proclaim to you in my Master's name, that he has everything you can need for body or soul—for time or eternity! And as his herald I cry, "Ho! everyone who thirsts, and whenever you thirst—come to the waters, come buy and eat! Yes, come, buy wine and milk—without money and without cost!"

I have a complaint against some—that they have not come often enough; and against others—that they have gone to some other market! But let me interrogate you a little:

- Did ever my Master frown you away?
- Did you ever find him lacking in kindness, pity, or love?
- Did you ever need any blessing which was not to be found in his fullness, or to be had at his throne?
- Did you ever do better, or so well anywhere else?

You must all to a man say, No! Why then do you forsake the fountain of living waters? Why do you wander upon every mountain and hill—and forget your true resting place? Jesus addresses you through me, and says, "O my people, what have I done unto you? Wherein have I wearied you? Testify against me!"

None have come too frequent; no—nor ever will. Come, then, and receive, and so glorify Jesus.

But I must draw to a conclusion, there are seven things I wish you may all more fully EXPERIENCE this year:

- His Spirit working in your hearts,
- His blood speaking in your consciences,
- His power subduing your corruptions,
- His blessing resting upon your souls,
- His presence cheering your way,
- His righteousness covering your sins,
- His peace keeping your hearts and minds.

There are seven things I wish you may know it is your privilege to HAVE this year:

- a name in his book,
- a sight of his covenant,
- a tear in his bottle,
- a place in his heart,
- a title to his fullness,
- a right to his promises, and
- an interest in his prayers.

There are seven things I wish you may DO this year:

- weep at his cross,
- wrestle at his throne,
- cleave to his truth,
- walk in his ways,
- aim at his honor,
- comfort his people, and

- spread his fame in every direction.

There are seven things which I wish you may ENJOY this year:

- the light of his countenance,
- the power of his love,
- the hope of his calling,
- the blessings of his chosen,
- contentment under all dispensations,
- liberty in performing his commands,
- and victory over every foe.

There are seven things from which I hope you may be PRESERVED from, this year:

- a hard heart,
- a seared conscience,
- a Laodicean state,
- a proud look,
- an unforgiving spirit,
- an envious eye, and
- from distrusting God.

And now, brethren, Jesus can give all that I wish you to experience, to know, to enjoy! And he can preserve you from all I wish you to be kept from. But he says, "I will be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them." You must ask, seek, knock, plead, wrestle, and agonize at his throne—for he loves a determined, importunate, persevering beggar; as is evident from Luke 11:1-14; 18:1-9.

"May the Lord bless you

and protect you.

May the Lord smile on you

and be gracious to you.

May the Lord show you his favor

and give you his peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

Hebrews 13:8 Always the Same

Christ is always the same. Christ's person never changes. Should He come on earth to visit us again, as surely He will, we should find Him the same Jesus, as loving, as approachable, as generous, and as kind. Though He will be arrayed in nobler garments than He wore when first He visited earth, though He will no more be the Man of Sorrows and grief's acquaintance (see Isaiah 53:3), yet He will be the same person, unchanged by all His glories, His triumphs, and His joys. We bless Christ that, amid His heavenly splendors, His person is just the same and His nature unaffected. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). (Spurgeon, C. H. Daily Help)

Hebrews 13:8 The Timeless Name

Whether the company is Twentieth Century Fox in Hollywood or Twentieth Century Data in Dallas, time has caught up with these companies and they're a century behind. Should they change their names? Consultant Frank Delano says, "You can't do business in the 21st century with a 20th-century name. You need a name that is really universal with no limitations."

Through the ages, Christians have known and worshiped a Savior who is not bound by time. His name? In Revelation 1:8, Jesus Christ identified Himself by saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, ... who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." He called Himself, "the First and the Last" (vv.11,17). And in verse 18, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

Do clocks and calendars leave you exhausted? Jesus Christ is the Master of time. Has death brought the pain of separation? Jesus Christ is Lord of eternity. Are you facing unwanted changes? Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Have failures filled you with despair? Jesus Christ is risen, the Victor over death and the grave!

It's true. In every century His name is universal, without limitation. Jesus Christ is the timeless name. —David C. McCasland

Jesus Christ--a wonderful name,

Eternal, unchanging, always the same;

He's the beginning and He's the end,

He's my Savior, my Lord, and my Friend. --Fitzhugh

Jesus is the Lord of time and eternity.

Hebrews 13:9 Don't Be Fooled

People don't like to be fooled, but it happens so often that it might seem as if they do.

Far too many people fall for crooked schemes that cost them money, endanger their health, or waste their time.

It happens to elderly people when they trust the friendly, persuasive person who comes to the door selling a too-good-to-be-true product. It happens when a shyster tells a couple that he's from the bank, and they need to withdraw money and give it to him to fix a bank error. It happens when a person with health problems buys hundreds of dollars' worth of bogus medicine.

It can happen to us too—in spiritual matters. We can be fooled by deceitful presentations that make guarantees far beyond what God has clearly promised. But this isn't anything new. Paul warned about this kind of deception in Colossians 2:8.

So, how do you protect yourself from those who make religious claims that God's Word does not support? By being "rooted and built up in [Christ Jesus] and established in the faith, as you have been taught" (v.7).

Whether listening to a salesperson or to a preacher, be discerning. Don't be fooled. —JDB —Dave Branon

Christ is all we need, His truth complete—

The world will try to add, subtract, distort;

Cling to what you know, and trust God's Word,

Don't let yourself believe a false report. —Carbaugh

Feeding on God's truth will keep you from swallowing a lie.

Hebrews 13:13

Morning and evening : Daily readings (April 6 AM)

Jesus, bearing his cross, went forth to suffer without the gate. The Christian's reason for leaving the camp of the world's sin and religion is not because he loves to be singular, but because Jesus did so; and the disciple must follow his Master. Christ was "not of the world:" his life and his testimony were a constant protest against conformity with the world. Never was such overflowing affection for men as you find in him; but still he was separate from sinners. In like manner Christ's people must "go forth unto him." They must take their position "without the camp," as witness-bearers for the truth. They must be prepared to tread the straight and narrow path. They must have bold, unflinching, lion-like hearts, loving Christ first, and his truth next, and Christ and his truth beyond all the world. Jesus would have his people "go forth without the camp" for their own sanctification. You cannot grow in grace to any high degree while you are conformed to the world. The life of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the highway of safety; and though the separated life may cost you many pangs, and make every day a battle, yet it is a happy life after all. No joy can excel that of the soldier of Christ: Jesus reveals himself so graciously, and gives such sweet refreshment, that the warrior feels more calm and peace in his daily strife than others in their hours of rest. The highway of holiness is the highway of communion. It is thus we shall hope to win the crown if we are enabled by divine grace faithfully to follow Christ "without the camp." The crown of glory will follow the cross of separation. A moment's shame will be well recompensed by eternal honour; a little while of witness-bearing will seem nothing when we are "for ever with the Lord." (Spurgeon, C. H.)

Hebrews 13:14

Glad To Get Home!

In wintertime, a condition known as a "whiteout" sometimes occurs along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The air becomes so filled with powdery snow that you can't see more than a few feet ahead. You feel totally helpless, especially if you're driving, and that's what we were doing on a bitterly cold December day.

Our family had been invited to my sister's house for Christmas dinner. As we headed west toward Lake Michigan, the weather became treacherous, but we made it to our destination. Later, however, as we were driving home after dark, the situation grew even worse. The expressway was covered with ice, traffic slowed to a crawl, and several cars were in the ditch. Then all at once we were enveloped by a brief whiteout. Believe me, it was frightening. After a slow, tedious journey, we finally reached Grand Rapids and pulled into our driveway. I think every member of the family said, "I'm sure glad to get home!"

I wonder if we'll have a similar feeling when we enter heaven. The dangerous "whiteouts" of our earthly journey will be over. The temptations, stresses, and failures will all be in the past. Best of all, we'll be safe with our Savior.

Yes, we'll be so glad to get home!—David C. Egner

When we all get to heaven,

What a day of rejoicing that will be!

When we all see Jesus,

We'll sing and shout the victory. —Hewitt

Heaven for the Christian is best spelled H-O-M-E.

Hebrews 13:14

To Be Continued

Do you like continued stories? Let's say you're reading a magazine article or watching a television program for half an hour, and you come to the place where the hero plunges into the water to rescue his drowning sweetheart. Then you're left hanging in the air with the words: "To be continued." How disappointing!

I have quite a different response to the inscription on the tombstone of a follower of Christ. It reads: "To Be Continued Above."

Yes, this life is but the first chapter of the book of life. Whether that chapter is long or short--it is not the end, but it is to be continued. For the believer, it will be continued in heaven with our Lord. There is no break between the chapters; you don't have to wait till next month's installment or tune in next week to hear the concluding episode. Chapter two follows chapter one without interruption. It is continued immediately, for "to be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

What will the next chapter be for you? It will be written sooner or later, either in heaven or in hell. Remember, when your time comes to die, that is not the end. Your story is "to be continued"--but where? —M.R. De Haan

Life's fleeting days will soon be o'er

When death ends all that's gone before;

Yet life in Christ continues still,

For all who lived to do His will. --DJD

Death is the last chapter of time, but the first chapter of eternity.

Hebrews 13:15

Be Filled With Thankfulness

Throughout history, many cultures have set aside a time for expressing their thankfulness. In the US, Thanksgiving Day originated with the pilgrims. In the midst of extreme hardship, loss of loved ones, and meager supplies, they still believed they were blessed. They chose to celebrate God's blessings by sharing a meal with Native Americans who had helped them survive.

We know we've lost the spirit of that original celebration when we catch ourselves complaining that our Thanksgiving Day has been "spoiled" by bad weather, disappointing food, or a bad cold. It's we who are spoiled—spoiled by the very blessings that should make every day a day of thanksgiving, whatever our circumstances.

Billy Graham wrote, "Ingratitude is a sin, just as surely as is lying or stealing or immorality or any other sin condemned by the Bible." He then quoted Romans 1:21, one of the Bible's indictments against rebellious humanity. Then Dr. Graham added, "Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness."

Which condition describes you?—Joanie Yoder

A grumbling mood of discontent

Gives way to thankfulness

When we consider all God's gifts

And all that we possess. —Sper

Gratitude is a God-honoring attitude.

Hebrews 13:15

THE BLESSING OF THANKFULNESS

SOME PEOPLE seem born with a sullen and feverish temper, and it is very difficult for them to brighten into smiles and songs. But whatever our natural disposition may be, if we belong to Christ it is our bounden duty to cultivate a thankful heart. A melancholy person has a bad effect upon others. It is miserable to have to work with or under a confirmed pessimist. Nothing is right, nothing pleases, there is no word of praise or encouragement. Once, when I was at Aden, I watched a gang of Lascars trans-shipping the mails. It was a pleasure to see them, one after another, carrying the bags cheerily because their leader kept them all the time singing as they did their work. If, instead of finding fault with our employees or servants we would look out for things for which we could commend and thank them, we should probably find a miraculous change in their attitude.

The advantage of joy and gladness is that it is a source of strength to the individual soul, and to all others who come within its range, and commends our Christianity! Sidney Smith says: "I once gave a lady two and twenty recipes against melancholy; one was a bright fire; another, to remember all the pleasant things said to her; another, to keep a box of sugar-plums on the chimney-piece, and a kettle simmering on the hob. I thought this mere trifling at the moment, but have in after life discovered how true it is, that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than more exalted objects." We may interpret the advice of this humorist and essayist by turning into joyous praise all the incidents of our daily life, arising with gratitude and thankfulness from every good and perfect gift to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world is sad, and has to pay her jesters and entertainers; it is a mystery to her that the face of the Christian should be bright and smiling, although the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine. Let us count up our treasures and blessings, and we shall find that even in the saddest and loneliest life there is something to turn our sorrow into singing (2 Co 6:10).

PRAYER - Help us, O Lord, to rejoice always; to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. AMEN.

Hebrews 13:15

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

THE HUNDREDTH Psalm is rightly entitled "A Psalm of Thanksgiving" (R.V.). The Psalmist calls for a "joyful noise," i.e. an audible expression of worship. Do not be content with a thankful heart, but express it! It is good to let God have "the fruit of our lips." As a bird will awaken the whole choir of a woodland glade, so the soul really aglow with loving adoration will spread its own contagion of song. How often Christian people hinder the progress of Christianity by their dullness, gloominess, and depression. His service is perfect freedom, and if we delight ourselves in the Lord, we should serve Him with gladness!

It is very important to maintain the habit of regular church-going because of its opportunity for worship. Let us "enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise!" By meditation and prayer let us ask that we may be accounted worthy to stand in His Presence, and offer praise and adoration to the Most High God, mingled with the fragrance of our Saviour's Name (Rev8:3-4).

"The Lord is good!" There are many mysteries, and much pain and sorrow in the world. We must dare to believe and affirm the goodness of God beneath all the distressing elements of modern life. With His goodness are combined His mercy and His truth. Let men do their worst, "His truth endureth to all generations." It is an impregnable Rock, on which the waves of sin can make no sensible impression. What comfort there is in knowing that equally His mercy is everlasting. We need so much patience, forbearance, and longsuffering, that if God's mercy were anything less we should despair, but it is extended to every generation till Time shall be no more!

PRAYER - Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 13:15-16

Sacrifices That Please God

A man touring a rural area of the Far East saw a boy pulling a crude plow while an old man held the handles and guided it through the rice paddy. The visitor commented, "I suppose they are poor."

"Yes," said his guide. "When their church was built, they wanted to give something to help but they had no money. So they sold their only ox. This spring they are pulling the plow themselves." The tourist was deeply challenged by their sacrificial gift.

Under Old Testament law, God required animal sacrifices, which pointed to Christ dying for our sins. His death brought them to an end, but the Lord still desires to receive spiritual sacrifices from His people.

God puts no merit in any attempts to earn His favor or call attention to oneself. But He delights in deeds that spring from faith that works through love (Gal. 5:6). They are spiritual sacrifices that come from giving ourselves completely to Him (Rom. 12:1-2). He is pleased when we continually give thanks in Jesus' name, do good, and share with others (Heb. 13:15-16).

Some spiritual sacrifices will be costly. But what is gained--His praise--is always greater than what is given up. --DJD

The gifts that we may give,

The deeds that we may do

Most truly honor Christ

When self is given too. --DJD

When Christ's love fills your heart, the more you give, the more you gain.

Hebrews 13:15

Say So

Mel Trotter was a drunken barber whose salvation not only turned his own life around but also changed thousands of others. He was saved in 1897 in Chicago at the Pacific Garden Mission, and not long afterward was named director of the City Rescue Mission in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Thirty-five years later, at a meeting at the mission, Mel Trotter was conducting "Say-So" time. He asked people in the crowd to testify how Jesus had saved them. That night, a 14-year-old boy stood up and said simply, "I'm glad Jesus saved me. Amen." Trotter remarked, "That's the finest testimony I ever heard." Encouraged by those words from such an important leader, that teenager, Mel Johnson, went on to become a Christian leader in his own right.

Young Mel was encouraged to say so, and he did. Six little words, followed by an encouraging comment. A testimony and an affirmation led to a life of service for God.

Let's look for opportunities to offer "the fruit of our lips," to tell others that Jesus is Lord and that He saved us. Tell your own salvation story, and ask others to share theirs as well—as a "sacrifice of praise to God" (Hebrews 13:15). Whether we are children, teens, or adults, we who belong to Jesus Christ need to stand up and "say so."

—Dave Branon

Tell me the story of Jesus,

Write on my heart every word;

Tell me the story most precious,

Sweetest that ever was heard! —Crosby

The more you love Jesus, the more you'll talk about Him.

Hebrews 13:15

Give Thanks And Remember

One of today's most popular syndicated newspaper columns is "Dear Abby." Started in 1956 by Abigail Van Buren, the advice column is written today by her daughter Jeanne Phillips. In a recent edition, she included this Thanksgiving Prayer written many years before by her mother:

O Heavenly Father:

We thank Thee for food
and remember the hungry.

We thank Thee for health
and remember the sick.

We thank Thee for friends
and remember the friendless.

We thank Thee for freedom
and remember the enslaved.

May these remembrances
stir us to service.

That Thy gifts to us may be used
for others. Amen.

The words of this prayer echo the clear teaching of Scripture. Our thanksgiving to God should always be accompanied by thinking of those in need. "Therefore," said the writer to the Hebrews, "by [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15).

But there is more to it than thankfulness. We are to put actions behind our gratitude. "Do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (v.16).

Be thankful for God's many blessings, but be sure to remember those who have less.

—David C. McCasland

Serving others is a way of thanking God.

Hebrews 13:17

Getting Rid Of The Pastor

A Christian leader told about some church members who came to him for advice. They wanted to know of a way to get rid of their pastor. Sensing that they were not being fair, he gave them these suggestions:

Look your pastor straight in the eye while he is preaching and say "Amen!" once in a while. He'll preach himself to death.

Pat him on the back and tell him his good points. He'll work himself to death.

Rededicate your life to Christ and ask your minister for a job to do. He'll die of heart failure.

Get the church to pray for him. Soon he'll become so effective that a larger church will take him off your hands.

If your pastor faithfully preaches God's Word and tries to live an exemplary life, do all you can to support and encourage him. Of course, no pastor is perfect, and sometimes a loving rebuke may be needed (1 Timothy 5:20). But a pastor carries a big responsibility (Hebrews 13:17), and a faithful man of God is worthy of respect and generous financial support (1 Timothy 3:1; 5:17-18).

By the way, when did you last say to your pastor, "I'm grateful for you and all you've done for me"? —Richard De Haan

A pastor leads best when his people get behind him.

Hebrews 13:17

Roast Preacher

People who have "roast preacher" for Sunday dinner need a change of diet. And a pastor who "chews out" his congregation needs to look again at his mission. A caring preacher will build up his church, and a caring church will build up its preacher.

In Hebrews 13:17, church leaders are called to watch over their flock as those who must give account before God. That's a tall order, but it's what God appoints them to do. And in the same verse, members of the congregation are reminded of their responsibility to their leaders. They are to be submissive to them and open to their correction. Their leaders will then have joy rather than grief as they seek to be faithful in carrying out their God-appointed duties.

How tragic that many church members have never learned this! All week long they criticize their pastor, and on Sunday they listen negatively as he preaches his heart out. Then they go home and have their favorite Sunday dinner—not fried chicken, but roast preacher.

Whatever our place in the body of Christ, let's build others up through mutual caring. Then instead of devouring one another, we will find joy in seeing pastors and their people being nourished and fed by one another. —Joanie Yoder —Joanie Yoder

The faithful pastor leads with love—

He serves the church for God above;

So may our criticism die,

And then his joy will multiply. —Branon

Pastors who preach God's Word need a good word from God's people.

Hebrews 13:20-21

DISLOCATED LIMBS

THE GREEK word here rendered perfect really means "to put in joint, to complete." In his original creation man's will was intended to register the Will of God, to say Yes to it, and to pass the divine impulses and commandments to the rest of our being. Sometimes on board ship, before the phone made it possible for the captain to speak to every part of the ocean-liner, I have heard Him quietly utter his orders to a subordinate officer beside him, who in turn repeated them in a loud voice through a speaking-trumpet or tube. That intermediary may represent the will which was intended to receive its directions from the Will of God, and pass them throughout the economy of our being. Such was our Lord's attitude throughout His earthly life. He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me"; "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But in the Fall, the dominance of God's will and the loyal response of man's will became disorganised; and the human will instead of functioning in harmony with the Will of God, began to obey the will of the flesh in its grosser or more refined forms. Not what God wills, but what 'T' Hill, has become the working principle of the great majority. Thus it has come about that the will, by constant misuse, has become dislocated, warped, "out of joint." Tennyson says: "Our wills are ours to make them Thine!" Just so, but they are too stubborn for some of us to manage. Hence the suggestion that we should pass the Mattter over to the "God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus."

Sometimes at football, or on the ice, a player may lose his balance, or be tripped up, and in the fall his shoulder may become dislocated. His arm is still in the body, but out of joint, so that it hangs useless by his side, until the surgeon by one strong wrench forces the bone back into its proper place. Is not that true of us? We are in the Body of Christ by redeeming grace, but we need to be set, i.e., to be brought into articulated union with the Will of God in Christ Jesus. Let us humbly ask the great Surgeon of sods, by the pressure of His strong and gentle hands, here and now, to joint our wayward wills with the Will of God, and then to work in us and through us that which is well-pleasing in His sight! (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 13:20-21

THE GREAT SHEPHERD

IT IS most comforting that our Heavenly Father is "the God of Peace." He is the God of the gentle zephyr, of the evening glow, of the mother's brooding care; and may be trusted by His gentleness and patience to make us great. Bruised reeds are not trampled beneath His feet, and the smoking flax is fanned into a flame. Do not be afraid of God--He is the God of Peace!

He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep. As our Lord descended into the Valley of Death, He breathed His departing spirit into the Father's hands. He knew that the path of life would unfold before Him. He knew that the Father's welcome awaited Him. And God did not fail Him! However low He went, when He descended into Hades, the Everlasting Arms were always beneath Him; and Him did God raise up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.

And will God do less for the Flock! There are many of the sheep that have been scattered in the cloudy and dark days. Will every

sheep and lamb be recovered, and led to the green pastures and beside the quiet waters of Paradise? Yes, every one! The great Shepherd would not be content if one were missing of those whom the Father has given Him (John10:28-29). Remember His own parable of the Shepherd who left the ninety and nine to recover the one. If you have come to Him by your will and choice, you are included in the Father's gift.

We are secure in the position which His grace has given us. It is secured not only by the promise of God, but sealed by the Blood of the Cross. That is the meaning of the words: "The Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant." Note that word eternal, which carries us back to the timeless past, when this compact was made. We may therefore humbly believe that our names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev13:8; Rev21:27). But we are saved to save others! It is thus that we make our calling and election sure (2Pe 1:10).

PRAYER - We thank Thee, O blessed Master, not only that Thou hast cleansed us from our sins, but that Thou hast entered into, and ratified by Thy precious blood, the eternal covenant which has made us Thine for ever. AMEN. (F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk)

Hebrews 13:21

Make you perfect in every good work to do his will.

To perfect is to adjust, to put in joint, to articulate us with the living Savior. It may be described as a surgical operation. Too many of those who are in the Body of Christ are not in living articulate union with Him. Hence the writer asks that we may be properly jointed with Christ.

The Agent of this process. — The God of Peace. Let us not be afraid of Him, as though He must use some terrible anguish, some heartrending grief. He will not shrink from this, if all other methods fail; but He prefers to achieve his purpose by gentle, tender, peaceful means. He is the God of the summer evening; of the bursting spring; of the slumber of the little babe.

The Guarantee that He will perform this process. — He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep; and surely the power which achieved that bringing again is capable of any demand that may be made on it. Will He do so much for the Shepherd, and neglect the flock? Will He give Him the victory, and forsake those for whom He won it? In bringing the Shepherd did He not pledge Himself by the most solemn sanctions to do all that needed doing for the weakest of his sheep?

The Object of this process. — He adjusts us, that all which is well pleasing in his sight may be readily fulfilled in and through our yielded natures. When the helmsman is right with the captain, the boat will naturally take the course that the captain selects. When the machinery is adjusted with the motive power, the pulse of the piston will be felt away at the furthest loom, with the smallest amount of leakage and the largest of result. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)