

## BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

**Sermon:** “Practical Divinity” from the “Anchored” sermon series

**Scripture:** Hebrews 13:1-16

### Key take-aways from the Scripture

- In this final section of the Book of Hebrews, we explore the idea of how our social and spiritual duties are to be animated by the love of Christ. The writer of Hebrews concludes this book with exhortations of how our behavior is in relation to one another (vv. 1-3); to ourselves (vv. 4-9); and to God (vv. 10-21).
- Chapter 13 begins with the sentence, “Let mutual love continue.” This harkens back to chapter 10:24, “And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds...”
- Verses 2-3 discusses how we are not to “...neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” There are several areas in Scripture that mention this as well, namely: Genesis 18:1-8 (Abraham and Sarah); 19:1-3 (Lot); Judges 6:11-22 (Gideon); 13:3-21 (Manoah).
- In verses 4-6, the exhortations move from behaviors we are to hold toward others to behavior toward ourselves. Verse 4 states, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure...” Verse 5 reads, “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have...”
- Verses 7-9 explains that we are to “remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you.” Here, we are exhorted to honor those that taught us the word of God, which helped to form and guide us in our faith. Their teachings (which must be rooted in Scripture and not “...carried away by all kinds of strange teaching...” (v. 9) help to anchor us to Jesus Christ “who is the same yesterday and today.” (v.8)
- Verses 10-16 discusses sacrifices pleasing to God. This section begins with how the high priest carried “...the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies were then burned outside the camp.” Christ’s sacrifice, which was made outside the city gate (v. 12) does not require certain actions from us, but rather our faith in Him.

### Key take-aways from the Sermon

- It is helpful to think of the Book of Hebrews as a “sermon”, and the “preacher” of Hebrews concludes this sermon at chapter 12. This Book contains a high Christology (a high understanding of Christ), which can be seen in Hebrews 1:3.
  - Jesus is both human and divine. He was tempted in every way that we are, but without sin. He is God incarnate...the Word made flesh.
- The intended audience of Hebrews was the early church growing tired in their faith. They are weary of trying to be faithful in a tumultuous environment.
- The guidance given to them was to turn our eyes upon Jesus...our *anchor*!
- In chapter 13, the writer switches gears and is a summary statement containing instructions and a benediction (think of it as, “one more thing, then I’m done.)
- The text today opens with “Keep on loving one another...” This is a call to *mutual love*. This is the “litmus test” for the church! Agape love!
  - “Loving one another is the never-ending Christian obligation; the essence of Christian ethics and behavior, promoting the highest good of others, and not causing harm.” -John Wesley
- Love is not a closed circle, and as verse 2 says, “Don’t neglect to show *hospitality* to *strangers*, for by so doing some have entertained angels unaware.” Heb. 13:2
- The author of Hebrews shares six social relationships in which love is to be shared: (1) Church: brothers and sisters; (2) Street: stranger; (3) Jail Cell: prisoner; (4) Home: spouse; (5) Marketplace: resources; and (6) Study: spiritual leaders (13:7).
- Conduct *is* our creed: unless belief becomes behavior, it does not mean much!
- In the early Methodist church, John Wesley was taking a lot of abuse due to the content of his sermons and disinformation surrounding the Methodist movement.
  - He wrote “The Character of a Methodist” to define what a Methodist is and is not. The aim of the church is to love people!
- If you really want to know what the church is like, you must get engaged. You must do something for somebody else.
- The heart of the gospel is the Man on the cross is our anchor and love has everything to do with it. When love is our guide, Jesus saves, and transformation happens in big and little ways.

### Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- What are some of the exhortations for behavior toward others that the author of Hebrews charges us with? How about toward ourselves? Finally, toward God?
- What are some of the practical duties that we are called to do in the service of others?
- What social relationships in Heb 13 do we encounter in which we are called to love?
- What does Rev. Dr. Chappell mean by “Conduct is our creed”?
- What was John Wesley’s conclusion in his “Character of a Methodist”?
- How is *love* the heart of the Book of Hebrews (and the entire Gospel in general)?

