

31. Understanding the Fact that Christ Is Unchanging

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Christ is our Mediator. We saw that because He is our Mediator that we are able to serve the Lord in a way that is well pleasing to Him. In fact, we are even able to bring glory to God by our good works. In our topic today, we are going to see some of the good works that we can show by our actions. We are also going to see that Christ is the One who is unchanging.

In Hebrews 13:1-4, we read, “Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also. Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” In our last topic, we saw that we are able to bring glory to God by both our words and our works. Here, in Hebrews 13, we see some specific ways that we can bring glory to God.

We bring glory to God by brotherly love. The word that is translated “brotherly love” is the Greek word “*philadelphia*”, so the city of Philadelphia means the city of brotherly love. In 1 Thessalonians 4:9, we read, “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” Here, we see that God is the One who teaches us to love each other with brotherly love. Romans 12:10 says, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.” Here, we see one way to show that love is by giving preference to one another. Then, 1 Peter 1:22 adds, “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.” This verse reminds us that this kind of love will be powerful if it comes from a pure heart.

Another way we bring glory to God, and show our good works, is by entertaining strangers. The word translated “entertaining strangers” means *to love strangers or to show hospitality*. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is Romans 12:13, where we read, “Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.” Here, we see that we are to be given to hospitality. “Hospitality” means *to make people feel at home when they visit you*. We see that some in the Old Testament had shown such kindness and later, realized that they had entertained angels.

We also bring glory to God by remembering the prisoners. A majority of the places where this word is used in the New Testament refer to Paul when he was in prison. The word speaks about those who are in chains or bondage. Here, we see that we are to remember them as if we were chained to them. In the time of the New Testament, prisoners were often beaten and mistreated by the Roman government. Paul wrote to Timothy, in 2 Timothy 1:8, “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.” We are to especially remember those who are prisoners because of their faithful service for the Lord. This is common in many countries of the world today.

We are also to bring glory to God in our marriage. The word translated “honorable” is usually

translated “precious” and means *highly valued or especially dear*. The word is used in 1 Peter 1:18-19, where we read, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Our salvation was purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Here, we see that God considers marriage very precious. He is the One who performed the first marriage in Genesis 2:18-25.

We see that sexual activity in a marriage is honored by God, but sexual activity outside of marriage is promised judgment. God will judge sexual activity outside of marriage, because it destroys the very foundation of family life. God said, in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” Here, we see that husband and wife are to become one. In fact, God told husbands, in Ephesians 5:25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” We see that the Lord used the love of a husband to picture His love for the church. As a result, marriage is very precious in the sight of God.

Hebrews 13:5-6 goes on to say, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” Here, we see that the next way that we are to bring glory to God is by the way we act. The word translated “conduct” means *character or manner of life*. Here, we see that our character is to be without covetousness. The word translated “without covetousness” means *not loving money*. That is due to the fact that 1 Timothy 6:10 tells us, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Here, we see that the love of money causes some to stray from the faith.

In contrast, 1 Timothy 6:6-7 says, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” Here, we see that godliness with contentment is the opposite of covetousness. The only other place the word translated “contentment” is used is in 2 Corinthians 9:8, where we read, “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” In this verse, the word is translated “sufficiency”.

God supplies us with all that we need so that we are able to carry out every good work. That is why we can be content with the things we have. The word translated “content” means *to be satisfied or to be sufficient*. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 says, “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Here, we see that the grace of the Lord is sufficient for us in any situation. The strength of the Lord is made perfect in our weakness. In that way, our lives bring great glory to the Lord, because He works in our lives and through our lives.

In addition, the Lord will never leave us or forsake us. The word translated “forsake” is the word that Christ spoke from the cross when He said, in Mark 15:34, “‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Here, we see that Christ was forsaken for us so that we would never be forsaken by the Father. That is why we can boldly say that we do not fear what people will do to us. The word translated “boldly” means *to be courageous or bold*. Two of the six times this word is used are in 2 Corinthians 5:6 and 5:8. Those verses say, “So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight...We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” In these two verses, the word is translated “confident”. As a result, we can say with confidence that we do not need to fear what others will do to us.

Hebrews 13:7-8 goes on to say, “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” The word translated “those who rule” means *to lead, to be a leader or to consider*. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 uses this word when those verses says, “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” Here, the word is translated “esteem”. We are to place a high value on those the Lord has chosen to lead in the church. That is why we are to remember them and keep them in our mind.

We see three things that godly leaders have done for us. In addition to leading us, they have spoken the Word of God to us. Here, we see that they have explained Biblical principles to us so we can know and understand the Word of God. Because of the leadership of Paul, we see that Acts 17:11 says, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to help people understand the Word of God.

Godly leaders have also given us an example of faith to follow. Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” He also said, in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.” We want to make certain that our lives and teachings agree because we are of following Christ. Christ is the true example of one who never changes and always provides a perfect example. In fact, we see that His example in the past, the present and the future will always be the same. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that Christ is unchanging.