

- 1) Dismiss Kids - Teams Sunday focus Echo
- 2) Apple Picking - Smolak Farms (Next Saturday morning) - more info in WG/online - Bring a family with you!
- 3) Anniversary Sunday...

Hebrews 13. Pg. 1009.

**“American Jesus”
Hebrews 13:1-16**

This morning I want to speak to you about the uncomfortable subject of pursuing our own comfort. More than we can begin to understand, comfort is the oxygen of our culture. Like fish oblivious to the presence of water, we often fail to recognize our immersion in a culture of comfort.

- We wear nice, comfortable shoes, ride around in nice, comfy cars, and travel in planes that allow us to maintain our addiction to entertainment while flying the friendly skies.
- We eat comfort food, relax on comfortable furniture, and take comfortable vacations to bask in experiences of comfort.
- Consider the air conditioner: Research scientist Stan Cox says if “India, Indonesia, and Brazil, used as much energy per capita for air-conditioning as the U.S., it would require 100 percent of those countries' electricity supplies, plus all the electricity generated by Mexico, the U.K., Italy *and* the entire continent of Africa.”

WELCOME. TO. AMERICA. Our pursuit of comfort is pervasive.

FCF: Here's my fear: our desire for physical comfort is depositing a desire for spiritual comfort that stifles us from the life God envisions for us. Like conditioned air, we are being conditioned by a culture of comfort.

What is worse... our preference for comfort can QUICKLY BECOME (2x) the lens by which we see Jesus. We possess an uncanny ability to fashion God into what we WANT HIM TO BE, and the JESUS in our image, the AMERICAN JESUS, is a God of comfort.

BUT American Jesus is not Jesus at all.

That's why we need a heavy dose of Hebrews 13 today. Hebrews is an extended encouragement on the supremacy of Christ and his cross. It was written to persuade new Christians who converted from Judaism to persevere in following the ways of Jesus.

TEXT DISPLAYED - Hebrews 13:1-16

The heart of this text is found in vv. 11-13.

- The writer draws a comparison between the Day of Atonement (when Jewish people sought purification from their sins) and the day Jesus died on the Cross.
- On the Day of Atonement, priests took the remains of the sacrificial offerings of bulls and goats “outside the camp” and burned them in the place of rejection, exclusion & shame...
- Which reminded him of what? Jesus, the True and Greater Sin Offering, crucified on a Roman cross outside the gate of Jerusalem, bearing our rejection, exclusion, & shame.

Jesus went out to bring us in. Verse 13 says: If that's what he did, that's what we must do!

The Point: Jesus calls us to go OUT beyond our comfort to bring others IN.

Let me give you 3 ways to resist following the American Jesus. #1

1. Uncomfortable choices (13:1-14).

- Jesus died to bring us to God *and*, “to sanctify the people through his own blood.” (v. 12)
- Jesus died to make us like him. That’s why the writer of Hebrews provides a flurry of encouragements in chapter 13.

BUT pursuing a holy life is not easy. We will have to make difficult choices. We can expect discomfort. Some of our most treasured idols (god-replacements) are addressed in these words.

First, he tackles the Idol of SELF (13:1-3). *Read 1-3.*

- What keeps us from extending love to one another, showing hospitality, and visiting those in prison? Selfish desires.
- “I’m too busy. I don’t have the resources. Nobody wants to hang with me.”
- The essence of love is self-giving for the sake of others. That’s God’s love. That’s Jesus hanging on a cross outside the camp.

Then, he addresses the Idol of SEX (13:4). *Read 4.*

- Here’s the goal: sexual purity outside of marriage, a deep desire to not let anything taint your affection for your spouse – whether current (if married) or future (if single).
- “Flee from sexual immorality.” (1 Corinthians 6:18) in our sex-crazed culture.
- The people at Freedom International say our generation both fights human trafficking *AND* consumes porn like no other generation. They go on to say this: “Fighting human trafficking and then consuming porn is like protesting a corrupt politician and then donating to his campaign.”

In vv. 5-6, he hits the Idol of MONEY (13:5-6). *Read 5-6.*

- Are we having fun yet? If we could peer into your bank statement, what story would it tell?
- Yes we have to pay bills and put food on the table, but no matter how much money we make, we are called to contentment & generosity.
- God’s presence and help are the means to love him more than money. He’s got us!

In v 7, he covers the idol of AUTONOMY (different form of selfishness). *Read 7.*

- Our resistance to authority reveals our desire for autonomy.
- If you can’t submit to human authority, you’ll find it hard to follow God, the one who gives human authority.
- If you can’t follow, you’ll never be able to truly lead.

No one exempt from these temptations, BUT God is more than determined to see the miracle of Christlikeness produced in you!

- And make no mistake, the work of sanctification is a miracle! You say: “prove it to me . . .”
 - [Far LEFT] Here - we are. . . [Far RIGHT] And - there is Jesus
 - God says: I am going to make YOU - like HIM.
- Jesus Christ, the “radiance of God’s glory.” Jesus Christ, “the exact imprint of his nature.”
- Us? Like him? As unfathomable as it is: God will not relent until he makes it happen.

Now, how do we get there? Becoming like Christ happens by feeding on Christ. . .

- Verse 9 tells us God designed the engine of our hearts to run on his grace, NOT holding to dietary restrictions that some people believed would make them acceptable before God.
- Then verse 10 refers to the bread of the Presence which priests were allowed to eat. And Hebrews says, we don’t need that bread, because we have the bread of life, Jesus Christ (John 6:35).

Is your hunger for God growing? Do you desire to do his will in the areas of selfless love, sex, & money?

T: We must be willing to make uncomfortable choices. #2 . . .

2. Uncomfortable convos (13:15).

Read 15. . . What is the instruction for us? "Offer a sacrifice of praise to God..." What does this mean?

- We hear "praise" and think songs. It might include that, but can't be limited to that.
- Why? Because it says our praise involves acknowledging his name.
 - That's us speaking actual words about Jesus.
 - The vision is the name Jesus flowing naturally from our lips, whether we are with people who believe or yet to believe in Jesus!
- This should not surprise us...
 - 1) After all, verse 12 is the epicenter of missions. Jesus died so that anyone and everyone can have life in him. Talking about him is our natural response of gratitude and wonder. But if that doesn't convince you...
 - 2) Zoom in on that 1 word with 5 syllables: "*Con-tin-u-al-ly*" in verse 15. It's always game time, anytime, anywhere!
- Our sacrifice to God is the public acknowledgement of his worth!

It's one thing to lift up the name of Jesus IN HERE (for most, our comfort zone).

How high are you lifting his name OUT THERE? That's where discomfort comes. That's when American Jesus is so attractive!

- "Jesus would not ask me to do something so uncomfortable."
 - "My coworkers might look at me different."
 - "It will be so awkward." I know . . . :) That's part of the fun of it! :)
- **Love moves past awkward.** Love is willing to pay the price! Love answers the call of Christ to deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily outside the camp, as we follow him (Luke 9:23)

It took me a long time to realize the biggest barrier to people hearing about Jesus is not the culture or people's attitudes toward "religion." The biggest and most maddening barrier to people hearing about Jesus is the Barrier of ME.

If it's been weeks, months, or years since you've talked to someone about Jesus, here's my painful conclusion: you love comfort more than Christ.

Listen carefully, my goal is not to guilt you into telling people about Jesus. Why?

- 1) I'm explaining the clear implications of this text.
- 2) Guilt doesn't work! It might get you to one conversation, but it won't last longer than one week!
- 3) These 16 verses SHOUT GRACE!! Look back at the first 2 words of verse 15: We proclaim Jesus through Jesus (his power, his love, his strength)! Grace, not guilt, will keep you talking when everyone else is silent.

It's about learning to love Jesus and love people more than we love ourselves. Those are the days, weeks, and months I talk Jesus the most!

You say, "Help me." I'd love to! Write down these 2 words: Credit and Questions

- Give Jesus Credit:
 - Them: "That was so nice of you." You: "I appreciate it, but believe me when I say, I didn't used to be so nice. Jesus."

- Them: "Wow. Why are you the only one at work not worried about the end of Q4?" You: "I get anxious too. Then I pray."
- Them: "You know, I've worked here for 12 years, and you're the first person that apologized to me and asked me to forgive you." You: Let me tell you a story...
- Learn to ask Questions:
 - Ask questions and let the conversation flow to Jesus.
 - What do you think about the vaping ban? Issues of Life, Health, the role of government. (3 directions)
 - Do you have any spiritual beliefs?

T: When we follow Jesus outside the camp, we will make uncomfortable choices, have uncomfortable convos, and finally, make...

3. Uncomfortable moves (13:16).

Read *verse 16*.

We do not simply proclaim the name of Christ. We simultaneously live the life of Christ. We keep seeing this in the Bible: not Word or Deeds. Word *and* Deeds. Word and MOVES.

I like the word MOVES over actions or deeds this week, because when you drop the S, what do you have? MOVE!! FEET!

- This is the Spirit-empowered, supernatural life. I hope you have some stories of FRUIT & GIFTS this week!
- We do good. We gladly share, because God is producing his life in us!

What moves is God calling you to make? Who is God calling you to love? How will you follow Jesus outside the camp so that others can be brought in to his life?

Here's a dangerous prayer: "God, what would you have me do?" [- J. Lanphier]

Here at RHC this might mean: Serving with a Team.

- We're so thankful for so many serving.... so many going above and beyond! You make Sundays great, and God is absolutely pumped up about it ("such sacrifices are pleasing to God."). Did you hear the applause of God when you walked in this morning? I can hear it?
- If you're yet to serve with a Team (maybe new, maybe been contemplating... whatever you do, don't let a vision of American Jesus slow you down. JUMP IN).
- Help our great teams go to the next level. Opportunities abound (HANDOUT)!

That's inside the church. What about the 1000 options outside the church? What can you share?

- Maybe you'll do some good by picking up a shift for a coworker.
- Maybe you'll do some good by serving to meet a practical need.
- Maybe you'll share your time with someone hurting by lending a listening ear.
- Maybe you'll share your home and a meal with a neighbor.

Conclusion:

Let me ask you this morning . . . **Will you seek comfort or Christ?**

F.F. Bruce says: "There, 'outside the camp,' stood Jesus, calling them to follow him. Inside they felt secure...; But Jesus claimed the world outside for himself. . . . Time and again in the history of the people of God a similar call has come when a new advance must be made into the unknown and unfamiliar, to occupy fresh territory under the leadership of Jesus. There is nothing static about him or his cause; to stand still is to fall behind him."