

Hebrews 13:4-6 "God Is Our Provider In This Life And The Next"

The 13th chapter of Hebrews is an encouragement as we meditate on the grace of God found in Jesus Christ seen thus far in this epistle. By way of recap we see His Divinity in chapter one along with His humanity seen in chapter two; His Holy and unique Priesthood as seen in chapters 3-8; the New covenant of His blood found in chapters 9-10; the faith He gives, as demonstrated in His people, in chapter 11 and the infinite difference between Mount Sinai, where we see the giving of the law, and Mount Zion which represents the heavenly city Abraham looked forward to by faith in chapter 12.

What a rich and awesome salvation we have in Jesus Christ. This has been the message in this letter with the intent of giving us a better appreciation of who we serve and why we must go forward with Him, not backward to the ways of old. But what brings all of this together for us is the love of Christ for us, that He would humble Himself to become a man and die to pay our penalty for sin.

It is this love which we are told to walk in as His Spirit indwells us and directs us to love as He loved us. And this is why chapter 13 starts the way it does.

HEB 13:1-3 "Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."

This is love in action. And as we come to our text we see how this love of God is to continue in the relationships we have with people. One of the most precious relationships which God Himself has instituted is marriage. And this is precisely why our writer brings this up because it is in marriage that we see Christ's love for His Church.

HEB 13:4 "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

Marriage is the first human-to-human relationship we see in the Bible that God ordains as the bedrock upon which civilization is built.

GEN 1:26 -28 "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

It is this special relationship of marriage which men are called upon to honor because it has been given as a gift to mankind directly by God. This is why our writer begins by saying, "Marriage should be honored by all,..."

You'll notice that it is not a command to just one portion of humanity, but all of humanity. In other words, marriage, as God designed it for a man and a woman, is for the entire population of the world. To try and alter this arrangement is to fight against God and we all know who wins there. And yet in cultures throughout history man has tried to tamper with this most sacred institution given by God for our good.

There's the tendency to look at our present culture and brand it as the most base and immoral culture to ever exist. And most of us would agree that it is a very evil time in which we live. But man hasn't changed much over the years when it comes to sin and we need only go back to places and cultures like Sodom and Gommorah to see how depraved the human heart really is.

Even way back then, homosexuality was an accepted alternative life-style, if you will. But we jump to today's world and we find that marriage is being redefined by special interest groups who want to justify and legitimize their sin. A federal judge in Hawaii has recently concluded that it is lawful for men to marry men and women to marry women.

More and more influential people in this country are attacking the very word of God in a way that invites His judgment. And so it shouldn't surprise us that we have as much ungodly leadership in this country as we do. God is simply giving this country what it

appears to want and that is no accountability to the One who created mankind.

And what we have sown we are now reaping. And as much as most of us would like to see more conservative biblical values brought back we must understand that this is not primarily a purely political problem. It stems from ungodliness gone unchecked. And many Christians today have tried to attack the problem from the political angle instead of understanding the heart of the problem is the heart of people who don't know Christ.

Instead of going out with the great commission of Jesus Christ, many Christians have in essence re-commissioned God's people to pursue an agenda which they believe is the short-term solution to a heinous problem.

I'm not against political avenues which our Constitution has provided for its citizens to allow them to get involved in shaping our country, but we must understand that it wasn't the Constitution in and of itself which shaped this country, it was godly men and women who took seriously their role as ambassadors of Christ in bringing His message of hope to a dying world which also included this country 200 plus years ago.

It's the heart of a nation which will determine its direction. The heart of this nation has long since been darkened with self-interest and has abandoned the God who changes hearts through His gospel.

This doesn't mean that we give up hope. For where the light of the Gospel is there is always hope. But remember that our hope is not ultimately in Government but in the God who sent His Son to redeem us from the penalty of our sin. When God changes hearts, through His message of hope, individuals change and this nation is made up of individuals. We've got a lot of work to do.

But those individuals make up families. And this is why God spends so much time in His word explaining why the family is so important as marriage is honored by all, especially Christians. By honored, God means that it is upheld according to His word.

Marriage was never intended to unite men together or women together.

GEN 2:24 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

God's people are to lead the way in demonstrating what a godly marriage is all about. It is a marriage based on Jesus Christ. It is a marriage which shows the world the love which Christ has for us as we make clear that God is at the center of our marriages.

It's no coincidence that God uses the imagery of marriage when describing His relationship with His people.

ISA 62:5 "As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."

The prophet Hosea was to give Israel a graphic description of how they had played the harlot with false gods as they abandoned the true God.

HOS 1:2-2 "When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son."

In this marriage relationship God was going to demonstrate that His love can bring back the stubborn and adulterous heart of Israel.

HOS 2:14-17 "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. 15 There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor [Achor means trouble.] a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. 16 "In that day," declares the LORD, "***you will call me 'my husband'***"; you will no longer call me 'my master. [Hebrew Baal]' 17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked."

This is the mercy of God reaching out to His bride as He reestablishes His love for an unlovely people.

HOS 2:19-20 "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. 20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD."

This is a prophetic text regarding the future Israel of God. This is a passage describing the bride of Christ which necessarily means that each of the one's betrothed in Hosea are those who are united to Christ by faith, even as Moses was betrothed to Christ.

Hebrews 11:24-26 ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ *considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt*; for he was looking to the reward.

The reward is given to all who have placed their faith in the God who promises a Messiah to bring them into the Kingdom of God, be they Old testament or New testament saints, whether Jew or Gentile.

I like the imagery the host of heaven describes in REV 19:7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready."

You and I are the bride of Christ. His love for us is as a husband who loves His bride and will protect and watch over her. It is an intimate relationship. This is why when He says, 'I will never leave you or forsake you', He means it, because we're His bride in the sense that we belong to Him and He is jealous for our love.

Paul conveys a very similar thought in 2CO 11:2 "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

To be presented to Him as a pure virgin indicates that we have no other gods before us who would take His place. We remain pure in our devotion to Him. He is our all in all. And yet, what so often happens is we, like Israel, find ourselves tempted to play the harlot with the world. His love for us may not wane, but His jealousy for our love will show itself as we grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

In fact, this was Paul's concern for the Corinthian church when he said in 2CO 11:3 "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

This is always a danger in a spiritual sense, but it may at times demonstrate itself in an outward way as the world, and even the church, does not hold marriage in honor. And this is why our writer says in our text here in Hebrews, "and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Paul explains this in 1CO 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male

prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

What Paul speaks of here is the contrast of those whose hearts do not seek after God and whose lives are characterized by such sin, and those whose hearts seek after Christ and whose lives are characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.

This is not to suggest that true believers will not sin, but it will not hold them in bondage because they've been set free from the penalty and the power of sin in Christ. They will desire to please the Lord and when they do sin we're told in 1JO 2:1-2 "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

John exhorts us not to sin, not to have our lives copy the unbelievers of this world to which we were once a part.

1CO 6:11 "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Again, we must consider the love God has for us and in gratitude we must love Him with all of our hearts, souls and minds. Another way we love our Lord is with our attitudes concerning the things of this world. And one of the things we all contend with is the seductiveness of material possessions to the exclusion of God.

HEB 13:5 "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Deut.31:6)

To love money is to be covetous of those things which we may not have but will do just about anything to get it, even if it means putting God to the side in our lives. As we've seen in the past, to keep your lives free from the love of money is a prerequisite for an elder.

1TI 3:2-3 "Now the overseer [elder] must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable,

hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, NOT A LOVER OF MONEY."

To love money is never to be satisfied with what you have. In fact, it's not a true love but a lust for money. Solomon wrote in ECC 5:10 "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless." [or vanity]

Paul wrote in 1TI 6:10-11 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness."

Money is not evil, but the love of it certainly is. And the love of money is characterized, as A.W. Pink puts it, as acquiring "wealth as the dominant passion of the soul."

COL 3:5 "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."

Idolatry can take on a variety of forms. We usually associate it with images carved in stone or wood and set them up in place of the Creator as the focus of one's life. But idolatry really speaks to those things which express worthlessness and vanity, contempt and abhorrence.

This physical world, compared to the one true God, is worthless and vain. It is to be held in contempt and abhorrence if it gets in the way of our Most Holy and Almighty God. This does not mean that the physical world is inherently evil as the ancients believed. Rather, because this world was created by God and was deemed "good" by Him prior to the fall it is still a place to be enjoyed as we give God glory for His creation.

Yes, it is true that this present world is under the curse of God because of sin, but this too will one day be remedied by God as He transforms this world at the last day when His resurrected people will get to enjoy a kingdom that will be raised from the ashes of this present world to God's glory and man's benefit.

2 Peter 3:12-13 ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But

according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

But, as we're told by the Lord, this present world is not our home.

The apostle John records for us the hope to which we long.

Revelation 21:1-5 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

And so, when we consider this present world, idolatry is taking anything in this world, even those things we would consider good, and placing them before God to the detriment of our walk with Him by faith.

It's true we may be tempted to put those things before God, but this is why our Lord encourages us in 1CO 10:13-14 "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. ¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry."

But to be able to flee from an idolatrous attitude with this world we must have the kind of attitude which is content to rest in Christ and His grace for our lives as we struggle at times with this world.

HEB 13:5 "be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Deut. 31:6)

Some people have taken this verse and concluded that Christians must take a fatalistic approach to life. That's not what this is teaching. The logic goes something like this: I have very little in life, I must be content with that and therefore will have no incentive to do better for me and my family.

There's nothing wrong with providing for your family and there's nothing wrong with wanting to do better. As we're faithful with little God is often pleased to give us more. Abraham was a man of substantial wealth, along with many other people God had called out to serve Him. But it was not their wealth they depended on, and that was the attitude of being content.

Some have suggested that we should never save money or put money aside for things we want because that would not be trusting God and being content with whatever we have, and yet we're given a very basic biblical basis for using money properly.

PRO 6:6-8 "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest."

The ant and many other creatures store provisions for future use. That is not a bad thing for them or us. But it is being content that what you have God has provided. If His provision is less than what we expect then we should be content in what He has given. If He provides you with health and an ability to make more money there's nothing wrong with pursuing it, as long as the pursuit does not become more important than the One who blesses.

Now, some of you might be saying, as I have on occasion, I could certainly be more content if I were wealthy. But that may or may not be the case. Contentment in Christ is not a matter of what we may or may not have in this physical world but rather knowing what we have in Christ and that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Paul learned contentment through trials in life as well as the good times.

PHI 4:10-13 "I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Paul's contentment was learned, but it was always a contentment and a joy in Christ, whose Kingdom is not of this world and neither

is our home. This is the kind of attitude our Lord wants us to have and He knows it won't come easy at times, but it can be learned as we depend on Him and look to Him by faith. His grace is always sufficient.

Being content is the opposite of being covetous. And sometimes it's developing an attitude which is similar to what Solomon expressed in PRO 30:8-9 "Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."

And so, the idea is to be content with what we have, and if we need more, to pray that God, who is our great provider, is capable of meeting whatever need we have and that He knows more than we what our true needs are.

But our writer in Hebrews adds that phrase which is taken from DEU 31:6 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

It might seem strange that we need to be reminded of this, but you know as well as I do that at times in our lives we may question that very promise, which is actually to question God Himself. God knows our weaknesses and He is continually reminding us that no matter what's going on around us He's there and He will even use the trials to build us up and strengthen our faith.

Though we may walk through the valley of the shadow of death our God is still with us. He will not abandon us because we're His bride whom He loves dearly.

ISA 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Our writer sums it up this way in our text.

HEB 13:6 "So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6,7)

You and I have all sorts of help in this world. It may be help from family, from friends, from brothers and sisters in Christ, but there is no greater helper than God Himself. And we can say with

confidence that "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

The world and the people in it may very well come against us at times. It can be a scary proposition. It was for Israel on many different occasions and yet God assured them that He would not leave or forsake them as they sought Him. Today, as then, we must know that if God is for us who can be against us?

It is God who fights for us. But if God chooses to give us just what we need for this life, we should be content that whatever else we may or may not have in this life we have the promise of a Kingdom in the true life we have in Christ. We have an eternal inheritance which cannot be taken away.

Paul was a man who probably did not have much in this world when it came to wealth and possessions and yet he could say in ROM 8:17-18 "Now if we are children, then we are heirs -heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Paul knew that we all have needs and even Jesus told us to pray, "give us this day our *daily* bread." God knows we have needs and He will provide. But more important, in the long run, is what we seek after which is not temporal, but eternal.

COL 3:2-3 "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

May we seek Him above all things, knowing that as we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness all of our earthly needs will certainly be met. Remember, "... our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,..." (PHI 3:20)