

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Part IV

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR - HEBREWS 13:18-25

The book of Hebrews is a treasure beyond words. It's going to be wonderful someday to meet the author.

With a PASSION this man has made a clarion call to people to recognize what they have in the person of Jesus Christ:

to KNOW Him

to APPRECIATE Him

and GRASP all that they have in Him.

He spent many chapters dealing with PRINCIPLES.

Then he moved to PEOPLE in Hebrews chapter 11 and now he's in the PRACTICAL section.

We are talking about PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS in these final verses.

There's a little phrase we have seen through out this book. The little phrase is LET US and it tells us exactly, what the writer wants the readers to do and he identifies with them.

So I want to take those THIRTEEN little phrases that occur in the book of Hebrews to summarize and set the stage for today's study.

- 1. Hebrews 4:1 – Let us fear. That is, lest we fail to enter into His rest.**
- 2. Hebrews 4:11 – Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest.**
- 3. Hebrews 4:14 – Let us hold fast our confession.**
- 4. Hebrews 4:16 – Let us be drawing near.**
- 5. Hebrews 6:1 – Let us be pressing on to maturity.**
- 6. Hebrews 10:22 – Let us draw near with a sincere heart.**
- 7. Hebrews 10:23 – Let us constantly be holding fast.**
- 8. Hebrews 10:24 – Let us be considering how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.**
- 9. Hebrews 12:1 – Let us lay aside every encumbrance.**
- 10. Hebrews 12:1 – Let us run with patience or perseverance the race lying before us.**
- 11. Hebrews 12:28 – Let us have grace.**

12. **Hebrews 13:13** – Let us go to Him outside the camp. Identify with this Christ in our reproach and in His reproach.
13. **Hebrews 13:15** – Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise.

Those little phrases let you know pretty much what he is wanting of them.

He doesn't want them to revert back to their old way of life.

He wants them to continue to persevere and press on to victory and to the accomplishment of the will of God for their lives.

Last week we had **ELEVEN** commands and those eleven commands became the first part of our study. We talked about:

1. An open heart – let us love.
2. We talked about an open home – let us show hospitality.
3. We talked about lets visit the prisoners – I have an open hand to help others.
4. Let me keep my marriage in honor.

5. Let me be free from the love of money.
6. Let me remember and respond to the leaders.
7. Let me stay away from wrong and weird teaching.
8. Let me go to Him outside the camp and identify with Him and His adequacy.
9. Let me offer a sacrifice of praise to God.
10. Let me do good and share with others.
11. Obey your leaders and submit to them.

That's pretty much a summary of what we've had.

Now today in verses 18-25 there are
TWO MORE COMMANDS.

There's one here in verse 18 and then
there will be another one down in verse 22
as he wraps this up.

**v. 18 Be praying for us, for we are certain that we are
having a good conscience, desiring to be conducting
ourselves commendably in all things.**

Command #1: Be praying for us.

Do you believe in prayer?

Have you availed yourself of it today?

Do you see God moving in your life?

Do you recognize the fact that God is in the prayer-answering business and it delights His heart when we pray?

Jeremiah 32:17-19

Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.... O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds.

God is at work.

William Gurnall, a 16th century writer said:

The worldly person who does not go to his business every morning by way of a prayer closet rarely returns home in the evening to give thanks to God. He begins the day without God and it would be unusual for him to end it with Him.

It delights God's heart for us to take time to be with Him.

Many of you sit here today recipients of blessings because people prayed for you.

Last week we said, many times the author gives us a COMMAND and then he'll give you a REASON.

One of the things you want to do in your Bible studies, you always want to look for little words like ANDS and BUTS and FORS and IN ORDER THATS because that will help you understand the text.

Notice the little word FOR because he says, "I'm asking you to pray for me for TWO REASONS."

- 1. I am certain that I am having a good conscience.**
- 2. I am desiring to be conducting myself in a commendable way in all things.**

Here's a guy with a clear conscience and a good conduct and he says, "So I think I qualify in asking you to pray for me.

"We are having a good conscience" and we are "desiring to be conducting ourselves commendably in all things."

**Let's talk about "having a good conscience."
The Bible talks a lot about the inner person.**

It's the CONSCIENCE that only you and I know about that's inside but it's the CONDUCT that people see.

The conduct flows out of the conscience and what's inside.

A good conscience is a soft pillow.

The scripture over and over again talks about a conscience.

Acts 24:16

Paul says, "So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

1 Timothy 1:5

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Timothy 1:19

We want to keep faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and they suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

1 Timothy 4:2,

Through the hypocrisy and pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared (cauterized).

A cauterized conscience leads to the absence of character and the absence of character leads to chaos.

The writer says, “I can ask you to pray for me because I have a good conscience.

And so flowing out of that conscience is a commendable conduct.

Isn't that interesting they go together.

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE leads to COMMENDABLE CONDUCT.

Now when you get to verse 19 he's going to put a little pressure on them.

v. 19 And I am urging [you] all the more to do this, [purpose] in order that I might be restored to you more quickly.

When somebody is urging you to do something, they put pressure on you don't they?

We need TO DO THIS now.

And he has a reason for this.

He saying, “Hey look I need you.”

**“And I am urging you all the more to do this,”
please do this for me.**

**And the reason I’m doing that is that I can be
“restored to you more quickly.”**

**What is it that would stop him from being able
to be with them?**

**There are a lot things that can stop you
from getting together where you need to get together.**

**There are people today that are not here in this class
because they have been stopped in some way.**

And have as a result not been able to come.

**And it would have been the Father’s will for them
to have been here in the class.**

But there were things that happened.

**Maybe it was an unexpected illness with a child.
Maybe it was a family crisis at the last moment.
Maybe it was a phone call.**

**All good things but Satan is in the business
of DISTRACTION.**

You say that’s weird. It’s not. It’s Biblical.

**Paul said to the Thessalonian saints,
“I tried to come to you twice but Satan thwarted us.”
In other words, we couldn’t make it.**

**And so basically he says, “I really am urging you
to pray for me and if you will pray for me I know
I am going to get to be with you soon.”**

**That’s where prayer and our communication
with Him come together.**

**That’s really the key. The ability to pray,
seek God’s face and watch Him move.**

**R.G. Lee was an old Baptist preacher many years ago,
powerful, powerful guy. He’s talking on the subject
of revival. He says:**

**If all the sleeping folk will wake up,
If all the lukewarm folk will fire up,
If all the dishonest folk will confess up,
If all the disgruntled folk will cheer up,
If all the depressed folk will cheer up,
If all the estranged folk will make up,
If all the gossipers will shut up,
If all true soldiers will stand up,
If all the dry bones will shake up,
If all the church members will pray up . . .**

Then we can have a revival!

Verses 20 and 21 are really a prayer.

v. 20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

Now the way he starts out he calls God the “God of peace.”

What does that tell you?

That tells you everything that characterizes God is peace.

It also tells me something else.

It tells me that God has everything under control.

God’s not sitting up there biting his fingernails and saying, “*I hope it’s going to work out!*”

I mean He is completely at peace.

His program, His purpose, His power is accomplishing exactly what needs to be accomplished.

God has everything under control.

What a wonderful thing to tell these Christians who are getting ready to throw in the towel because they think God has lost it.

And that their circumstances are beyond His ability to handle. He is the God of peace on the horizontal and He is the God of peace on the vertical.

The “God of peace” what’s the next phrase? “Who brought up from the dead” now you just read that and you say well He’s the God of peace and He brought Jesus up from the dead – resurrection.

This is the first time you have mention of the resurrection in the book of Hebrews.

When the writer waits until the last chapter to bring up a truth as important as the resurrection, there is a reason for that.

The resurrection is the most powerful argument for the fact that you have everything that you need in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father would have left God the Son in the grave if He had not fully qualified by the living of His life and dying upon the cross making an acceptable sacrifice for our sin and providing eternal salvation.

But because He raised Him from the grave and this God of peace brought Him back from the dead you have the greatest argument to tell us, what He did for us.

And we have everything we need.

**Now you're saying what did the resurrection do for me?
Well I'm glad you asked that question.**

- 1. First of all He provided REDEMPTION? Do you know what that is? He paid the price fully for your sin. There's no one sitting here today that will come up short. You have not sinned beyond the price that God has paid.**

He has taken care of the price of sin and redemption.

- 2. Secondly, He has provided the basis for RECONCILIATION. I don't care where you've been sleeping. I don't care what you've been doing. My God has provided now as the God of peace a way that you can be reconciled to Him.**

Colossians 1:20

Having made peace through the blood of His cross

- 3. And third because of the resurrection not only is redemption the price that has been paid and not only is reconciliation possible, listen the best news of all is you have the potential for the most exciting dynamic RELATIONSHIP that a person could ever ask for and that is a daily relationship with God and the joy of knowing Him and walking through**

life in this relationship just gets better and better and better.

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead” who? “The great Shepherd of the sheep.”

This is the relationship that Jesus sustains with these Hebrew Christians.

He is the “great Shepherd of the sheep.”

Can I give you some verses?

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not.

John 10:11

I am the good shepherd; I lay down my life for my sheep.

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd; and I know My own.

1 Peter 5:4

The great shepherd, the chief shepherd is going to appear. (That’s Jesus Christ.)

**But what are we?
We are sheep aren't we?**

What does Isaiah say about sheep?

Isaiah 53:6

**All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.**

Ray Stedman often laughed because he said people have a wrong idea about sheep. He says:

I came from Montana and know a good deal about sheep. If you are from the city you have probably learned about sheep from "Mary had a little lamb" and "Little Bo Peep." You think, therefore, that their fleece is as white as snow and that if you leave them alone they'll come home, wagging their tails behind them. But I can assure you it is all a lie; it is not true!

Sheep are the most helpless of creatures. There are two outstanding characteristics of sheep: they have no wisdom, and they have no weapons. They are forever running off and getting lost and unable to find their way back, and if anything attacks them they are utterly helpless to defend themselves. That is why they need a shepherd.

Isn't that great to know that when you get off running by yourself you have a shepherd that's looking for you and you also have one who is there to protect you.

verse 20 "Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant."

What's the "blood of the eternal covenant?"

It's the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

When He died He signed the eternal covenant.

**The old law of Moses is a temporary covenant.
It is a conditional covenant.**

**Now if you add the little phrase,
"now may the God of peace," to verse 21
it will make it more meaningful.**

**Now may the God of peace, not only do
these other things but may He**

**v. 21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, doing
in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through
Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

The word EQUIP, is used THREE different ways in the New Testament.

- 1. It's used of a fisherman who has a hole in his NET so he has to repair the net.**
- 2. It's used of a doctor who is setting a bone. He has to MEDICALLY correct the situation.**
- 3. It's also used MILITARILY, to supply the armor and the equipment necessary to win the war.**

And that's the way I believe the word is used here – MILITARILY.

The writer is saying this God of peace will outfit you to negotiate the war that you are fighting.

He is there to take care of all of your needs. He will equip you in every good thing to do His will.

We need to learn how to thank God for the equipment that's available for us to negotiate life victoriously.

If we're failing it's not God's fault.

It's our failure to appropriate the supplies and the resources made available to us to win the war.

So let me share the eight "Ps."

God, I want to praise you:

**for your PERSON,
for your PRESENCE,
for your POWER,
for your PROGRAM,
for your PURPOSE,
for your PROVISION,
for your PROTECTION,
and for your PEACE.**

Now look at the next phrase.

May the God of peace be “doing in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.”

Back at the beginning he said. You know I have a clear conscience and I also want to act in a commendable fashion.

Now he’s saying, I’m acting commendably in the doing of His will but He’s also working inside of me.

**Let’s put it this way,
God will always work in you
before He works through you.**

**God will not allow His bread to be broken
by dirty hands.**

**He will not let fruit be born
by a dirty, unpruned instrument.**

**So God is constantly at work in us
in order to work through us.**

**And He's praying for both of those.
He's praying for:**

the external – OUR WORK TO DO HIS WILL

but internally – HIS WORK IN US

The writer starts singing the doxology.

**“To whom [Jesus Christ] be the glory forever and ever.
Amen.”**

His last command is in verse 22.

**v. 22 But I am urging you, brethren, listen willingly to
the word of exhortation, for I have written to you
briefly.**

I am urging you, brethren.

**Evidently some of these people are not hearing
what he has to say.**

**Remember in chapter 5, he told them that they
had become dull of hearing.**

Listen attentively to the exhortation.

Listen willingly, don't resent, and don't retaliate.

Repent, release and respond.

In the midst of the crisis trust God.

v. 23 Be knowing that our brother Timothy has been released; with whom, if he is coming soon, I shall see you.

v. 24 Greet all those who are leading you and all the saints. Those from Italy are greeting you.

Show respect for the leadership.

Listen to these verses in Eugene Peterson's *Message* on Proverbs.

Proverb 25

**Remove the wicked from leadership
and authority will be credible and
God-honoring.**

Proverbs 28

**When the country is in chaos,
everybody has a plan to fix it—
But it takes a leader of real understanding
to straighten things out.**

And Proverbs 29

**A leader of good judgment gives stability;
an exploiting leader leaves a trail of waste.**

**What he's saying is
respect and honor the leadership.**

**But the leadership has a responsibility
to walk with God.**

v. 25 Grace be with you all.

**He uses the word "GRACE" EIGHT TIMES.
Let me give them to you quickly.**

Hebrews 2:9

Hebrews 4:16 – He uses the word twice.

Hebrews 10:29

Hebrews 12:15

Hebrews 12:28

Hebrews 13:9

Hebrews 13:25

**All of our relationship with God is on the basis
of GRACE:**

PAST,

PRESENT, and

FUTURE.

In salvation, grace provides the gift of eternal life.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: We have a responsibility to be praying for one another.

LESSON #2: A good conscience and good conduct put us on praying ground.

LESSON #3: Prayer moves the hand of God in the accomplishment of His purpose for our lives.

LESSON #4: He is the God of peace because He has everything under control.

LESSON #5: The resurrection demonstrates the Father's stamp of approval on the work of the Son.

LESSON #6: Jesus is a "great high priest" and He is a "great Shepherd."

LESSON #7: The foundation for our redemption, reconciliation, and relationship is found in the "blood of the eternal covenant."

LESSON #8: The "God of peace" will "equip you . . . to do His will."

LESSON #9: His resources are totally adequate to the full accomplishment of His will for our lives.

LESSON #10: He is working in us and He is working through us.

LESSON #11: I am so glad that I am in His intensive care. He monitors my every move!

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v. 25 Grace be with you all.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Hebrews 13:18-25 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. What two things is Paul certain of, according to verse 18?
3. What is Paul urging them to do for them and why, according to verses 18-19?
4. How is God the Father described in verse 20?
5. How is Jesus described in verse 20?
6. What is Paul's desire for them, according to verse 21?
7. What is Paul urging upon them, according to verse 22?
8. What word about Timothy does Paul have for them, according to verse 23?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: We have a responsibility to be praying for one another.

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