



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews

Chapter 13

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Introduction

- In Chapter 12 St. Paul explained to the Hebrews the importance of remaining faithful to Christ
- Facing persecution and different trials moved St. Paul to offer to the Hebrews his pastoral advice about how to stay together and pull together in the face of very difficult issues
- True fellowship is an essential element in facing hardships
- It is similar to closing sections in the letters of St. Paul



Love (13:1-7)

- There is no true fellowship without love
- V. 1: Brotherly love
- V.2-3: Love of strangers
- V. 4-6: Love in Marriage
- V. 7: Love of pastors and shepherds



Love (13:1-7)

- In order to bear witness for Christ and to endure to the end, brotherly love is a must
- Hospitality (to support the thrown out Christians, to evangelize, to share information about other Christians in the world, and the opportunity to host an apostle in the first century)



Love (13:1-7)

- He encourages them to show love toward those in prison or those who are being tortured whether because of persecution or in general
- They may face the same fate soon so they should do what they would like to have done for them



Love (13:1-7)

- Marriage is honored because it is part of God's plan
- They need God to be in their midst, so they have to keep their marriage pure
- Love of money is evil, so they should not worry if they lost their possessions for Christ's sake. He will take care of them



Love (13:1-7)

- Love should be demonstrated toward our pastors, the departed and the alive
- We should obey them and greet them
- For the departed, we should also reflect on the outcome of their manner of life and imitate their faith
- Honoring and venerating saints
- Learning by imitation

Warning Against Heretics (13:8-9)



- Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the protection against any heretical teaching
- The Lord, our high priest, is the same:
 - ❖ Yesterday: Offered up supplications (Heb 5:7)
 - ❖ Today: representing us because he endured trials like us (Heb 4:15)
 - ❖ Forever: He will never abandon his role as our high priest (Heb 7:25)

Warning Against Heretics (13:8-9)



- Strange teaching about food is different than teaching about fasting
- These strange regulations and rules have never brought any advantage
- It is the grace of God that strengthens the heart
- As he instructed them to accept marriage as honored, he is instructing them to consider the food as gift of God



Christian Sacrifices (13:10-16)

- The Christian altar was the sacrifice of Christ (His Body and His Blood)
- The undesirable parts were burnt outside the tent
- Christ dies outside Jerusalem (Holy week)
- He encourages them to accept the reproach of being outside the synagogue and suffer with Christ



Christian Sacrifices (13:10-16)

- In reality it is not a reproach but an honor because we don't have a permanent city here
- Acknowledging this honor moves us to offer the sacrifice of praise (the Eucharist)
- Thanksgiving is also translated in the deeds of kindness and sharing
- Offering is an essential element in worship



Exhortations and Benediction (13:17-21)

- Why should we obey our pastors:
 - ❖ They watch out for our souls (bishop)
 - ❖ They must give an account to Christ
 - ❖ To do their ministry with joy not with grief
 - ❖ For our benefit and profit



Exhortations and Benediction (13:17-21)

- The pastor needs the prayers of his people in order to perform his ministry according to God's plan
- Their prayers will support his good conscience in order to live honorably
- The verb to be restored could refer to healing from illness or to release from prison or simply to the end of an absence



Exhortations and Benediction (13:17-21)

- The descriptions of God is related to the persecution that they were facing:
- God of peace: They need this peace during this time
- God conquered the death of Christ, so He will conquer their persecution
- Jesus Christ is our shepherd who died on our behalf and made eternal covenant with us



Exhortations and Benediction (13:17-21)

- In the midst of persecution the believers need God to heal them to be prepared for a life of Christian service (make you complete)
- The purpose of this is to do God's will and what is pleasing in His sight (Faithfulness and obedience)
- The will of God for the readers was to stay true to Christ
- If this happens, there will be glory for Christ forever



Final Notes (13:22-25)

- He humbly urges them to bear with his word
- Timothy was released from prison and they would see them soon
- Those from Italy who are with me here or the letter was sent from Italy
- A prayer for the grace of God to be with the readers is very suitable to their situation



Conclusion

- How do hospitality to strangers and visiting prisoners relate to brotherly love?
- How can we recognize greed in ourselves? What will be the signs?
- What is the antidote for greed in our lives?
- What kinds of sacrifices or offerings are Christians called upon to make?