

In this chapter we see the final exhortation and benediction. The concluding exhortations deal first with the individual Christian's duties toward other Christians. They are to love one another, remember those strangers and those in bonds. Marriage is to be held in honor. They are to be free from the love of money. God will be with them and help them. They are to remember those who ruled over them. They are to have complete devotion to Jesus Christ. The epistle ends with personal references and affectionate greetings. The author requests them to pray for him. He asks God's blessings upon them. He tells them that Timothy is at liberty and will be to see them soon. Salutations are given to all the saints.

In this final chapter we see Jesus as our sanctifier (v12). He begins by giving us examples of Christ in the lives of his believers. The chapter begins by telling the reader to continue in brotherly love. The readers of this epistle already had brotherly love as evidenced by Hebrews 6:10, so the message is to continue in the **love of the brethren**. Love is the motivating force of Christianity. Christians must always continue in love. If Christians do not continue in love of the brethren, their religion is useless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

One aspect of brotherly love is hospitality and caring for others. *(2) Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (3) Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body*

In loving their brothers, they must remember this includes **strangers** who are their brothers in Christ. They must show strangers hospitality. This still applies today. In the first century inns were expensive and of ill-repute. The allusion to entertained angels unawares refers to Abraham and Lot (Genesis 18 and 19). Notice that the "entertaining strangers unawares" is past tense. The meaning is not so much that they may be showing hospitality to a supernatural person, as much as the showing of hospitality may bring them blessings such as these angels did for Abraham. Christians need to remember the words of Christ in Matthew 25:44-45, which teaches that when Christians help one of Christ's servants, they help the Lord himself. There are still people who need help. Christians must exercise their love in this way also.

In addition, they were exhorted to remember those in bonds (prison) as a part of their love of the brethren. It probably means those in prison because they were Christians. They were to be sympathetic to the bonds of others. *I*

Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. When one member suffers, we all suffer, and as long as we live in the flesh we might find ourselves in similar circumstances.

From the matter of loving one another, the writer addresses several aspects of living the Christian life. One has to do with family and the other is contentment. Both of these areas are near and dear to each of us. To begin he speaks of marriage. ***(4) Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*** Marriage is to be held in esteem by all. The marriage vows are to be kept. The **bed** refers to the sexual intimacy of marriage, which is the privilege of marriage alone. **Fornication** includes all types of illicit sex. **Adultery** is the violation of the marriage vow by having sex with one not your mate. Sex is right and holy in the marriage relationship. Sex outside of marriage or with one not your marriage partner is sin.

From there he moves to contentment. ***(5) Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*** Two of the greatest temptations of man are unchastity and covetousness. Both are products of selfishness. The word of God frequently warns against these vices because they are harmful to the spiritual life of a man. Instead of **the love of money** that leads to many problems, the Christian is to be content. The lover of money cannot be content. To be content one must do what he can to improve the quality of his life and then trust in God in whatever state he is. The reason one can be content is because God has promised to be with Christians and never forsake them. These exact words are not found in the Old Testament; however, the thought is found in Joshua 1:5.

Verse 6 quotation is from Psalm 118:6 but is fitting for the contented Christian. ***(6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*** Romans 8:31 is a good commentary on this verse. ***Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*** Instead of trusting in wealth, the Christian is to trust in God who will never forsake those who love and obey him.

The Hebrews were urged to remember their leaders. ***(7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*** These were probably those

of Hebrews 2:3 who had brought them the gospel. In verses 17 and 24 the reference is to leaders who were living, but here it is to those who had spoken (past tense) the word to them; those who had finished the course and kept the faith. They are to remember their faithful lives and follow their example. The reason you can follow their faithful example is because of the consistence of Jesus. **(8) *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*** Jesus is always the same. He never changes. He will never change. Christians are to remain faithful. They should not accept any new doctrine. The gospel does not change. Change is most often brought in by false teachers; thus a warning.

(9) *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.* They were warned about false teachings. What these false teachings were one cannot ascertain. It seems they had to do with eating of food, but there is not enough information to know exactly. ***Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*** In making reference to meats (v9) the writer make one final blow to the inferior old sacrificial systems which leads us to our key Jesus verse.

(10) *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.* **(11) *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.*** Christians have an altar; it is the sacrifice of Christ. Those who still serve the tabernacle and the sacrifices of the old covenant cannot come to the altar of Christ. The reason is that the sacrifices of the Old Testament were shadows or types of the real thing. When the real thing came, the shadows were no longer needed. One cannot enjoy the benefits of Christ while serving the Law of Moses. It was nailed to the cross.

But reflecting back, the priest ordinarily ate the flesh of the animals sacrificed; however, they did not eat the animals sacrificed on the Day of Atonement. On the Day of Atonement a young bull was offered for the sins of the high priest, and goats was offered for the sins of the people. The offerings must be totally consumed with fire in a place outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27). The next verse will show this is parallel with Christ. The eating of literal food does not save

one or make one more spiritual. Just as the sacrificial animals were burned without the gate, (v12) Jesus was crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem which leads to our theme passage. ***Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.***

Sanitation means to set apart. Because of what Jesus accomplished outside the city, we are set apart from the world. Because of the sanctification we look forward to a “continuing city” which is to come (v13).

Because of what Jesus did for us outside the city, we worship him. Notice (15) ***By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. (16) But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*** Christians are not only to worship and praise God, they are also to do good to their fellowman and share with them when they are in need.

From here we note the Christians responsibilities toward the elders of the church. (17) ***Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*** Them which are over you are the elders.. Elders have the oversight of the congregation. Christians are to obey them and submit to them. Elders are to look after the spiritual life of the Christian as a shepherd looks after his sheep. If Christians obey and submit to the elders, their work shall be a joy. If not, the elders’ work will be grief. Elders desire that Christians live faithful lives. They must do all they can to assist and guide Christians. Elders will give account of their work before God.

The writer concludes with a few closing remarks. First he asked for their prayers (v18) and include that he might be restored to them. This implies that he had been there before.

He reminds them of the benefits by the resurrected savior (v20-21). He sends the good news that Timothy had been released from prison and that he might be come and come visit them soon.

He concludes the epistle by sending greetings to the leaders or elders, and all Christians there. (24)

(25) *Grace be with you all. Amen.*

This is the same close as Titus 3:15. The typical close of a Greek letter was "Farewell." This epistle has a Christian close, as one would expect. **Grace be with you all** means the love of God be with all of you.