

Practical Advice

12th Sunday after Pentecost - Year C - 09/01/2019

Psalm Reading: 81:1, 10-16

1st Reading: Luke 14:1, 7-14, 2nd: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Hebrews was probably written as a theological sermon that was to be circulated among many churches. But Chapter 13, the conclusion of the book, is a pastoral address sent to the people in those churches. It addresses practical matters that apply directly to them or to society at large.

(v.1) *Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.*

Who are we talking about here?

Family?

Brothers and Sisters in Christ? / Tribe? / Nation? /
World?

What does it mean to love?

Feeling?

But also action.

Mutual support helps us all to be more secure.

(v.2) *Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers...*

Treat others as we ourselves would be treated.

Jesus – Golden rule.

(v.2 cont.) *for by so doing, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.*

Example – Abraham and three men

(v.3) Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Prison ministry

About reforming.

All sinners.

Paul is in Prison

Pliny's letter to Trajan - Persecution

(v.4) Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer...

Adultery hurts individuals

Basic building block of society is the family unit.

Adultery destroys that construct.

(v.5) Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have...

What are we to keep our lives free from?

Love of money, not money itself.

The nature and use of money itself

Medium of exchange.

When money becomes an idol – bad.

Money spent wrong way...

(v.5 cont. and v.6) ...because God has said, "Never will I leave you; Never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

So, God provides all the comfort and joy that you need.
You do not need money for that because you have an infinite resource at hand.

The Love of God. Grace of God.

Practical advice in this practical world.

Just like Ten Commandments.

(Rules to help society to get along, to advance)

(v.7) Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

After specific injunctions. The author gives them specific examples to follow

Who are these leaders?

Apostles, Follow their example.

Spread the word, but all said to have died martyrs death except John.

(v.8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Promises made – promises kept.

Before all time and on into eternity.

Blessed Assurance

(v.15-16) Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Because Jesus has done so much for us, because God has granted us grace, we must be grateful. And because of the love God showers upon us, we sacrifice of ourselves to God. Of course, we do this weekly through our tithes and talents, but the author of Hebrews says that more is required of us. Just as we trust in the Lord so we also bring “a sacrifice of praise.”

Fruit of our tongues.

Often in the form of Hymns

Praise the Lord O my soul
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
Produces good things.
Love of God
Unity in Christ

Conclusion:

Disparate ideas and advice
But all tending to the same goal of unity
Prison
Strangers
Protecting the Family unit
Sharing with one another (money)

It all boils down to the first statement in this closing passage. That we should love one another as brothers and sisters. So these rules are designed to make our lives better in the here and now. They are pointing us toward an afterlife with God. And, ultimately, they are conducive to making the world a better place.

Please put yourselves in a posture for prayer...

Blessed God, you lay out rules before us. And though we sometimes chafe at the restrictions, we know that the rules you set before us are designed to make our lives easier in this world. Help us to imbibe your Word. Help us to spread your Word to every corner of the planet that you may bring us to a new heaven and a new earth where all will be peace and unity.

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