

HEBREWS

“NO TURNING BACK”

Hebrews Lesson 21

Ice Breaker: What is the best job you ever had? Who trained you to do that job?

INTRO: As the writer of Hebrews closes his letter, he reminds us of the job we are to do. As priests of God, we have the greatest job on earth. It's not an easy job to learn, but God has supplied trainers to help you learn it.

READ: Hebrews 13:7-28

7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. 10 We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

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

17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. 19 I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

23 I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

24 Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

25 Grace be with you all.

Q: In verse 7, we are commanded to remember our leaders. Why is this so important and why does he follow this command with the statement about Jesus never changing?

- Your leaders speak the Word of God to you and are examples of how to follow God's Word.
 - You can see how they apply the Word of God to their lives and know if you do the same, you will have a similar result.
- Some people claim, "what works for you may not work for me."
 - Jesus' Words work the same for everyone and for all time.

Q: Verse 9 says it is better to be strengthened by grace than ceremonial foods. What does this mean?

- It means don't look for another rule to make you more holy. Look for a stronger relationship with God.
 - People relied on following ceremonial food rules to make them more spiritual... it didn't work.
 - Today people look to add another rule to follow in order to be more spiritual. They reason that if they could work harder, things would go better.
- Grace comes from Jesus
 - John 1:16 *"From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another."*
 - It is relationship with Jesus that strengthens our hearts, not our ability to keep rules.

Q: Why do you think the writer of Hebrews tells to go outside the camp in order to be with Jesus in verse 13?

- Following Jesus will virtually insure you won't be in the "in crowd" ... even among the religious.
- We need to desire popularity with Jesus more than popularity with people.
 - Which do you affiliate with more: Jesus or your church?

Q: In verse 15 and 16, we are told to offer sacrifices. If the sacrificial order of the Old Testament is over, why do we need to make sacrifices?

- 1Pet. 2:5 says, *"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*
 - The sacrifices offered under the Old Testament were made by Jewish priests to gain God's acceptance.
 - The sacrifices we are to make as His holy priesthood are made BECAUSE we have been made acceptable through Jesus Christ.

Q: What are the Spiritual Sacrifices we are to offer?

- Praise—fruit of the lips that confess His Name.
 - Vs.15 *"...let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name."*
 - Praise may not be more important than the others, but it is unique.
 - Praise is the only thing you have that God didn't give you and it's the only He can't force you to give.
 - Praise is where you express your admiration and love.

- Doing good and sharing with others.
 - Vs.16 *“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*
 - When we put ourselves out to do good to someone or share our resources with them, God accepts it as a sacrifice to Him.
 - Matt. 25:40 *“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*
- Your Body
 - Rom. 12:1 *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”*
 - All of your parts are to be surrendered to God for His use.
- Financial Support for the ministry.
 - Phil 4:18 *“I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.”*

Q: In verse 17 we are commanded to obey our leaders and submit to their authority. What authority do leaders have?

- The word translated “obey” is the Greek word **peithō**, and it means to “be assured, be confident”.
 - In other words, the command is to have confidence in your leaders.
- The word translated “submit to their authority” is the Greek word **ypeikō** which means, “to yield, give way”, or “to be submissive”.
 - The NIV is the only translation I could find that inserts the word “authority”.

Q: What are you to yield, give way to, or be submissive to?

- According to verse 7, it’s the Word of God they speak to you and the example of their way of life.
- You are to imitate their faith.
- Leaders do not have “personal” authority; they have “referred” authority.
 - Matt. 28:18 *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*
 - Leaders don’t get authority to do what they want, they have authority to do what Jesus wants.
- Leaders only have the authority Jesus gives them, and that authority is to be used to serve others, not get others to serve them.
 - Matt. 20:25-28 *“Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Q: Why would resisting or frustrating a leader “be of no advantage to you”?

- Being easy to help means you will get lots of help to know and serve the Lord.
 - Being hard to help means you will not get much help.
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APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Who are the leaders that spoke the Word of God to you?
 - a. What is the outcome of their way of life?
 - b. Are you imitating their faith? Why or why not?
2. Your “job” is to be a priest offering sacrifices to God. If God called you in for a performance review, which sacrifices would He say you are doing well with?
 - a. Which sacrifices would He say you need to improve?
3. Would your leaders say you are easy to help or hard to help?
 - a. Ask your leaders and see if they answer the way you thought they would.