**Community Group Discussion Guide**

**Hebrews 13**

**Sermon Overview:** The emphasis of this sermon will be on the benediction portion of the text. We will see that Jesus Himself is the one who equips and works in us to do his will and offer pleasing sacrifices to him. God’s equipping is seen in our obedience.

**Context:** The final chapter in the book of Hebrews functions to be the epilogue to everything that has been discussed throughout the book. Most—if not all—of what is said in Hebrews 13 is based on offering up to God worship that is acceptable and pleasing to him (Heb. 12:28).
 The author has defended the excellence of Jesus above all that the Hebrew people would have turned to. From Moses, to Joshua. The Levitical priesthood, and even the angels. There is no one greater in all creation than Jesus Christ. Christ’s Melchizedekian priesthood continues forever, and because of this great hope that is found in Jesus, those that believe in the Lord have cause for celebration and endurance of faith. Now, in proverb like rhythm, the author will list commands on how Christ followers offer acceptable worship to God.
 There is a call in which the church ought to practically express their love for one another (1-6). Dr. Tom Schreiner says, “the Christian faith expresses itself in mutual care and love for one another.” The witness of the believer is demonstrated to the viewing world through the virtues of Christ being played out in biggest to the smallest actions of the saints. **“*Such sacrifices are pleasing to God*”** (v. 16), the church is a family where love is at the heart. This love is also expressed in welcoming the stranger through the opening of one’s home in hospitality. We are to care for the prisoner and the sufferer in the Lord. We suffer as they do, we are imprisoned as they are since—in Christ—we are just that, “one body” with them (v. 3). The same brotherly love is to be displayed by letting **“*the marriage bed be undefiled*”** through sexually immoral and adulterous acts (v. 4). The love that we have in Christ will find it’s culmination in contentment in life, for believers have their hope set not on worldly gain, but on Jesus who will never leave nor forsake them.
 Christians are called to remember the faith and example of the leaders of the church, imitating their lives, as well as suffering like Christ Jesus suffered (v. 7-17) so that his life may be manifested in us. We are to trust God by remaining obedient to godly leaders, knowing that they will give an account to God for how they shepherd his flock. Obedience to the shepherds and pastors of the church is not meant to be done with groaning or complaining, but with a joyful heart (v. 17-18).
 The author encourages the Hebrews with a benediction. He prays for them that God would work in them what is needed to endure in faithful obedience. “…***equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen***.” This is a reminder that we cannot live the Christian life without the power of Christ working in us. He is our peace, our power, our shepherd, and our savior. The book ends with an exhortation to bear with the words that have been written about clinging to Jesus. There are final greetings and salutations to the readers and pastors of their churches.

**Key Points:**

* Sacrifices pleasing to God v. 1-19
* Benediction v. 20-21
* Final greetings v. 22-25

**Discussion/Application Questions:**
Verses 1-19

1. Of the sacrifices mentioned in v. 1-6, what are some specific ways we struggle to love God and others? How can you be intentional about bringing God-centered change to this?
2. We are called to “let brotherly love continue.” What are some ways in which we can display familial love to others?
3. How can we show hospitality to our neighbors in the midst of fear and worry due to COVID-19?
4. What does it look like for the church to see themselves as one body? What does this mean for those who suffer through sin and its effects?
5. Why is killing sin so pivotal to a healthy marriage? What are preventative actions we can do today to love our current/future spouse and honor the marriage bed?
6. Despite the reconciliation through Christ’s blood, why is discontentment a constant battle for believers? What can happen to our relationship with God when we are constantly discontent with our lives?
7. Share a testimony of a leader or a characteristic of a leader in the church who has greatly shaped your walk with Christ. Why is it important for leaders to walk blamelessly?
8. **Read v. 8:** Why or why not is this verse a comfort to you? What are the implications of this verse?
9. Why is discipleship pivotal for believers if we are to imitate the faith of Christ-centered leaders?

Verses 20-21

1. What about the character of God gives you peace in the midst of chaos like we are facing right now?
2. Verse 20 calls Jesus the resurrected shepherd of the sheep. How should this impact the way we trust and follow him in dark times?
3. How could you use this passage and the attributes of Christ to share the gospel with someone who has no peace and no shepherd in current crisis?
4. This benediction asks God to equip Christians to obey him and live a life pleasing to him. Does this reflect the way you pray for yourself, your family, your church? What are things we need God to equip the church in to be more pleasing to him this week?
5. What are evidences that God is equipping us for obedience vs. some other motivation (fear, performance, pride, etc.)?
6. If a life pleasing to God is brought through Jesus Christ, what steps are we taking to draw closer to Jesus right now?

**Prayer Guide:**

Pray for our church as we go through a season of uncertainty. That we may not hide in fear but see this trial as an opportunity to draw closer to the Lord and share the good news that we have for everyone.

Pray for our city that those who live in our neighborhoods, work with us, attend our schools, or do recreation near us would ask spiritual questions that will lead them to Jesus. Pray that the laborers may be placed in their paths and that they may boldly share the gospel clearly.

Pray for our world that missionaries who serve in places where people endure suffering for sharing Christ would be stirred up to continue in love and good deeds. Pray for mission trips that are leaving from our church to engage in such places.