

# HOLY LIFE OF A HOLY CONGREGATION

Hebrews 13:1-25

# CONTEXT

- + Our text today is the conclusion to last week's study.
- + Its aim...to move you by appealing to your sense of duty, community, and sympathy for one another!!!
- + The congregation is urged to serve God as a holy, priestly congregation.



# CONTEXT

**+ Finally, we hear today a series of positive and negative instructions which are designed to correlate ethical issues with liturgical matters.**

# VERSES 1-6

## **Life in the Congregation as a Priestly Fraternity (vv.1-6)**

**A. Instruction on the persistence  
of brotherly love (v.1).**

**B. Instruction on the hospitality to  
strangers (v.2).**

**C. Instruction on Care for Imprisoned  
and Maltreated Members (v.3)**



# VERSES 1-6

## Life in the Congregation as a Priestly Fraternity (vv.1-6)

**D. Instruction on Honoring Marriage  
and Remaining Sexually Unpolluted  
(v.4)**

**E. Instruction on the Avoidance of  
Greed by the Practice of Contentment  
and Dependence on God (vv.5-6)**

# Verses 1-6

## **A. Instruction on the persistence of brotherly love (v.1).**

- 1. Brotherly love is a must...it's the condition for life in the congregation as the household of God (3:6).**
- 2. This is a must...since it is a condition of “remaining” (12:28; 13:14).**
- 3. This “philadelphia” [φιλαδελφία] is a biological kinship...we all are “God’s children” and “blood brothers” with Jesus (2:11-12, 17).**









# VERSES 1-6

## C. Instruction on Care for Imprisoned and Maltreated Members (v.3)

1. The prisoner: In the ancient world, inmates were not fed or cared for by their jailers...left to family...later to the Church.



# VERSES 1-6

## C. Instruction on Care for Imprisoned and Maltreated Members (v.3)

2. The maltreated: Those who are mistreated by public officials, who would take their property/possessions.

**This was the Churches answer to persecution by pagan societies.**





# VERSES 1-6

## D. Instruction on Honoring Marriage and Remaining Sexually Unpolluted (v.4)

The institution of marriage was instituted by God as an exclusive life-long union between a man and woman. It is a gift given to men and women for their exclusive enjoyment.

Marriage should be honored by all,  
and the marriage bed kept pure,  
for God will judge the adulterer  
and all the sexually immoral.


**Hebrews 13:4**



# VERSES 1-6

## D. Instruction on Honoring Marriage and Remaining Sexually Unpolluted (v.4)

This directive is to ensure that married couples understand that their physical relations are permissible in God's sight. Their physical relations in God's sight is not uncleanness; but they are to keep their relationship "pure."



Marriage should be honored by all,  
and the marriage bed kept pure,  
for God will judge the adulterer  
and all the sexually immoral.

**Hebrews 13:4**






# VERSES 1-6

## D. Instruction on Honoring Marriage and Remaining Sexually Unpolluted (v.4)

What makes the marriage bed unclean...adultery. These offenses desecrates God's holiness, thus they will incur His divine and just wrath.




Marriage should be honored by all,  
and the marriage bed kept pure,  
for God will judge the adulterer  
and all the sexually immoral.

**Hebrews 13:4**



# VERSES 1-6

• HEBREWS • 13:5 • ESV  
KEEP YOUR LIFE  
*free* FROM THE  
LOVE OF  MONEY,  
AND BE CONTENT WITH  
WHAT YOU HAVE, FOR HE  
HAS SAID, "I will  
**NEVER** leave you  
or **FORSAKE** you."

**E. Instruction  
on the  
Avoidance of  
Greed by the  
Practice of  
Contentment  
and  
Dependence  
on God  
(vv.5-6)**



*This is the Confession that Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran  
Church must retain as their Confession of Faith!*

Jesus Christ is the same  
yesterday and today  
and forever.

Hebrews 13:8





# *Kosher* The Laws of Kashrut

Kosher (permitted)	Trayf (forbidden)
Ritually slaughter beef, sheep goats and deer with no flaws or diseases	Pork, camel, rabbit, rodents, reptiles, and any animal that died of natural causes
Chicken, turkey, quail, geese	Eagle, hawk, vulture
Salmon, tuna, carp, herring, cod	Crab, lobster, octopus, clam, swordfish, sturgeon
Meat eaten separately from dairy	Meat with dairy (e.g., cheeseburger, burger & shake, chicken cordon bleu)
Wine or grape juice made under Jewish supervision	Any other wine and grape juice
Soft cheese and kosher hard cheese	Most hard cheese

# VERSE 9

**The establishment of the heart by grace rather than by eating unbeneficial foods (v.9).**

**“...Heart by Grace...”**

**+ Abstinence from certain foods is of no benefit to the heart (conscience).**

- Only by God's grace does one have a “good conscience”;**
  - Only by the “sprinkling of blood”**



# VERSE 9

**The establishment of the heart by  
grace rather than by eating  
unbeneficial foods (v.9).**

*.....sprinkling of*



# VERSES 10-14

**These verses are seen as one of the most difficult passages of Scripture**

- **Altar (v.10) = The Throne of Grace**
  - Focal point of Worship
  - The place where Jesus offers His Body and Blood...to you!
- **“No Right to Eat” = priest in Jerusalem.**
  - Forbidden to eat sin offering (Lev. 16:27)
  - Sacrifice had to be burned “outside” (v.11)
  - So, priests cannot eat of New Covenant
  - Reserved for those outside the camp



Jesus is the High Priest, of the Order of Melchizedek, who is sinless and therefore the perfect Sin Offering!

Jesus suffered "outside the gate" or outside of the Temple and City!



Thusly, all who believe and are baptized are the beneficiaries of His sacrifice!

# VERSES 15-19

Your service has four distinct characteristics (v.15):

1. “A Sacrifice of Praise” – you have a thank offering you receive...Body and Blood;
2. Your praise is offered “through” Jesus;
3. Your praise is offered regularly;
4. Your praise is offered as “fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name....”



# VERSES 15-19

**Your Sacrifice of Praise is connected to the “*Gift* [θυσία] *Offerings*” (v.16):**

- 1. Unlike the OT thank offerings, your gift offering is an individual offering... collected during Worship for the mutual support of leaders, needy members, and others in want;**
- 2. It is sanctified by being offered to God by His called servant...thus, it is a holy offering.**

# VERSES 15-19

**Your Sacrifice of Praise is connected to  
“obeying your leaders” (v.17):**

- 1. This doesn't means that your “leader”  
(pastor) is a taskmaster...but is the man call  
and placed by God, in your midst, who  
proclaims His Word of Grace.**
  - Thus, in coming to Divine Service, you hear and receive from your leader God's Means of Grace.
- 2. Why heed or listen?**
  - Your pastor must give account...vicariously
  - He stands watch to protect ...false teaching
  - Congregation defers so as not to burden



# VERSES 15-19

## The Praying Congregation (vv.18, 19):

1. As with the Preacher and his associates, the congregation is to pray for their leaders...as their leaders pray for them.
2. This request for prayer concludes the chain of instructions that are all linked to v.1; to practice “**brotherly love.**”

# CLOSING GREETINGS

**These verses (20-25) comprise the close of the sermon and is the common closing used throughout the ancient world.**

**1. The closing serves as the end of the liturgical teaching of the Preacher;**

**2. There is a call for the congregation to exchange greetings with its leaders and one another; and,**

**3. The Preacher provides a pastoral greeting of the congregation with the words, “*grace [be] with all of you.*”**



# **We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God** *stanzas 3 and 4* **LSB 941**

You, Christ, are King of glory, the everlasting Son,  
Yet You, with boundless love, sought to rescue ev'ryone:  
You laid aside Your glory, were born of virgin's womb,  
Were crucified for us and were placed into a tomb;  
Then by Your resurrection You won for us reprieve  
You opened heaven's kingdom to all who would believe.

You sit in splendid glory, enthroned at God's right hand,  
Upholding earth and heaven by forces You command.  
We know that You will come as our Judge that final day,  
So help Your servants You have redeemed by blood, we pray;  
May we with saints be numbered where praises never end,  
In glory everlasting. Amen, O Lord, amen!

*Stephen P. Starke, b. 1955*

