

Hebrews 13-1-6 The nitty gritty of worship!

Preamble:

Plug men's retreat...

Sermon handouts for kids...

Prayer for illumination: please join me in prayer...

Sermon introduction:

Last week I preached on Hebrews 12:28-29. Let me read this text again...

Hebrews 12:28–29 (ESV) — 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

Life can be very shaky...

Our health can be shaken.

Our grades can be shaken.

Our relationships can be shaken.

Our government can be shaken.

Our jobs can be shaken.

Our economy can be shaken.

Our children can be shaken.

Everything in our lives can be shaken. But, the kingdom of God cannot be shaken. Why? Because the kingdom of God is ruled by King Jesus, the king of kings and lord of lords. His unshakeable kingdom provides us with stability when everything around us is shaking.

How should we respond to this glorious reality? With worship (read verse 28 again).

Worship is more than singing on Sunday morning.

Worship is whole-hearted service to God.

Worship is something we are supposed to do 24-7.

Pastor Dick Lucas said, "Worship is Christian living."

But what does it look like to worship God? I'm glad you asked. Hebrews 13:1-6 shows us how to worship God in three areas.

Love

Marriage

Money

Let's look at each one in more detail.

First, we can worship God through Love.

Let me ask a few questions...

Who are we supposed to love? All people, especially Christians.

Hebrews 13:1 (ESV) — 1 Let brotherly love continue.

This verse summarizes verses 1-3, which implies that the context of all three verses is brotherly love, that is love for the saints. The word “brotherly” in verse 1 is an astonishing word. Why? It was no small task for God to give you millions of spiritual brothers and sisters. His son had to suffer and die in your place so that your sins could be removed, so that you could be adopted by God, so that you could have millions of spiritual siblings.

This means the church is not like Shriners International, the Rotary club, the Masons, the Elks Club, your CrossFit gym, a Fraternity or Sorority, or any other organization. It is a family!!! All Christians, even the ones we don't like, are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Who do we love? All people, especially Christians!

How do we love? Through costly acts of service!

Hebrews 13:1–2 (ESV) — 1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

This text exhorts the original audience to show hospitality to strangers. In the 1st century this meant providing fellow Christians, whom they did not know with lodging. We know that the word “strangers” refers to other Christians because of the context of verse 1 and 3.

Hospitality was especially important in the ANE. Most inns/hotels were dirty, uncomfortable, dangerous, and very immoral (i.e. they usually doubled as brothels).

Christians needed places to stay when they traveled from city to city and Inns were simply not an option. Christian love manifested itself in providing lodging for the saints. Wasn't this costly? Yes, it was very costly, but it was also an act of worship.

Why the part about angels? Abraham and Lot showed hospitality to angels in the OT (Gen. 18:1-8, 19:1-9, Judges 6:11-14, Job 31:32, Isa. 58:7). The author brings this up simply to show how much God prizes hospitality.

Hospitality is not the only costly act of loving service.

Hebrews 13:3 (ESV) — 3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

According to **Hebrews 10:32-34** some of the saints were in prison due to their profession of faith in Christ. The author of Hebrews urges his readers to visit the saints in prison. Why? Because they are part of the same spiritual body.

The saints in prison needed food, clothing, and companionship. Visiting these saints would have been costly. It might bring shame, disgrace, or prison itself!

The author of Hebrews is making a simple point in 13:1-3. We can worship God as we love the saints through costly acts of service.

Illustration:

Many of you excel in this area...

Recently someone called me and said, "We know that so and so in the church is struggling financially, we would like to pay their rent for a month. Can you help us do this anonymously?" I said sure... they quickly wrote a \$1200 check.

When one of our members was on bed rest during a difficult pregnancy. Many of you stepped up and stocked her refrigerator with meals.

I know of another situation where a member knew that a family in the church had the flu. She brought them a box full of oranges, canned soup, and other comfort foods.

A small group new of a church family that was unemployed. They pooled their resources and gave them a large financial gift to help them pay the bills for a few months.

Several of our church families have housed members for months during significant times of need.

Others have done yardwork for those in need.

Others have reached out to widows and widowers by inviting them over for a meal.

Others open up the homes for hospitality on a regular basis.

One of our church families was having a health crisis. One of our members said to the family... "you guys need a break, here is a check for \$6k to pay for childcare for a few months."

These are all acts of worship.

Application:

Our culture is different than 1st century culture. Fellow Christians may not need lodging or a prison visit, but they may need companionship, money, a hospital visit, a baby shower, a bridal shower, or childcare.

How do you identify Christians?

Is it a certain style of clothing? No!

A certain haircut? No!

Living in a certain location? No!

Driving a certain car? No!

Reading certain authors? No!

The true mark for a Christian is Love!!!

John 13:35 (ESV) — 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Why do we love? Christ first loved us... (preach gospel)

First, we can worship God through love. But there are more ways to worship God...

Second, we can worship God through marriage

How? We honor marriage!

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV) — 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all...

In the 1st century, the marriage bond meant very little. Fornication, adultery, and homosexuality were common. Our cultural moment is similar to 1st century Rome.

Adultery is rampant.

Pornography (a marriage killer) is rampant.

No fault divorce is rampant.

People are getting married later and later than they used to, because they don't want marriage to "hinder their careers."

Marriage has been totally redefined.

Al Mohler writes,

"Throughout human history-in virtually all civilizations- marriage has been understood as the union of a man and a woman. That has changed." (Mohler, WCBS, xiii)

K. Hughes writes,

"For many, "marriage" is at best a provisional arrangement between two people (sexual orientation is irrelevant) that can be dissolved whenever one wishes, for any reason." (K. Hughes)

Christians who honor biblical marriage are now considered to be on the wrong side of history.

Application:

Christians, all Christians, are called to honor biblical marriage.

This does not mean that every Christian must get married, or that marriage is superior to being single.

Every Christian can honor marriage in our culture by promoting marriage with their words and deeds. Parents talk to your kids about the joys of Christian marriage. More importantly, model the joys of Christian marriage for your children.

We can honor marriage by encouraging Christians to stay married.

We can honor marriage by remembering that divorce is not an option for Christians unless there is adultery or abandonment. Even when these things happen, all is not lost, there is still hope and power for reconciliation.

You can honor marriage by forgiving your spouse, serving your spouse, and humbling yourself before your spouse.

Singles you can honor marriage by keeping your virginity intact until you are married.

Honoring marriage benefits everyone. Marriage is the basic building block of society and the church. As marriage crumbles, society and the church will crumble. One of the greatest needs of the day, is strong and healthy marriages.

There is massive emotional, psychological, and spiritual wreckage coming in the wake of the sexual revolution. When this happens, Godly Christian marriages will be very attractive to a lost and hurting world.

Why does honoring marriage matter so much? Marriage is a picture of Christ and his church (Eph. 5)

How do we worship God through marriage? We honor marriage!

How else do we worship God through marriage? We pursue purity in marriage!

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV) — 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled,...

The “marriage bed” is a euphemism for sex in the context of marriage. The author of Hebrews, inspired by God, urges all married couples to keep their marriage beds undefiled by sexual immorality.

Adultery defiles the marriage bed.
Sex before marriage defiles the marriage bed.

But porn is currently the number one defiler of the marriage bed. Men and women, we must flee pornography.

Not only will porn ruin your sex life, more importantly, it will dishonor God. If porn is an issue for you, please, please, please get help. Men talk to your home group leader. Ladies talk to your home group leader’s wife. If this sin stays hidden it will grow and fester. You need to walk in the light if you want to change. You can’t change on your own. Porn is more addictive than most drugs. Please Get help!!!

God wants married couples to enjoy sex for his glory. Yes, for his glory! Don’t forget that God invented sex.

One scholar writes,

“The bed - the sexual relationship - is an altar, so to speak, where a pure offering of a couple's lives is made to each other and to God.” (K. Hughes)

Undefiled sex in the context of a godly marriage can be an act of worship!

*How do we worship God through marriage? We honor marriage!
How else do we worship God through marriage? We purify marriage!*

Why should we worship God through marriage? God will judge!

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV) — 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

God will judge those who continue to defile the marriage bed with pornography, adultery, and fornication. Let me read a few more texts-

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (ESV) — 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV) — **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (See also Eph. 5:5-6; 1 Thes. 4:3-7; Rev. 21:8; 22:15)

Illustration:

I recently heard a story about a married man who was very involved in his local church. He was even in church leadership for a season, but he was living a double life. One life was the life of a well-respected Christian husband and father. The other life was the life of adultery and pornography. He kept his double life hidden from everyone for years. But eventually he confessed his sins to a pastor. The pastor asked him what caused him to finally confess his sins. Do you know what he said? He said, “I don’t want to go to hell!” This man was a professing Christian and a good theologian. As a result, he knew his Bible well. He knew about the texts I just read, and he was rightfully terrified.

Yes, one is saved by faith alone. But real faith does something to us. We can’t have the Christ that justifies without the Christ that sanctifies. It is a package deal. You get both aspects of Christ’s work when you become turn away from sin and trust Jesus. This means that if you are truly a Christian you will change over time.

Application:

Here is the good news, if you are a Christian God will forgive you for your sexual immorality.

But here is the bad news... even though God forgives, there are mighty consequences in this life. Like what? Lost jobs, divorce, broken relationships, jail, STD’s, unwanted pregnancies, and many other gut-wrenching consequences.

If you don’t believe me that God disciplines his children for sexual sins, read the story of King David in the OT.

*We worship God through love
We worship God through marriage*

Third, we worship God through money

In verses 5-6 we see a positive command and a negative command! Let’s look at the negative command first.

What is the negative command? Don’t love money!

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV) — **5** Keep your life free from love of money,...

This is a very difficult command for us. Why? We live in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Currently America ranks third behind Switzerland and Australia in the category of wealth per adult (\$400,000). If you have over \$100,000 in assets (which is many of you) you are currently ranked among the world’s wealthiest ten percent. Historically, most of us in this room would rank among the wealthiest one percent of world history.

This is very sobering in light of the words of **Mark 10:23** Jesus says, “**how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!**”

Our culture is obsessed with wealth. The worth of others is often determined by what they drive, where they live, what they wear, and where they vacation?

We may not love money, but we love the things that money can buy; cars, homes, clothes, security, freedom, reputation, and nice vacations.

The author of Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Spirit, commands us to keep our lives free from the love of money.

Let me make some application:

Money is not evil. The love of money is evil. It is ok to make lots of money, live in a nice house, and drive a nice car, as long as you don't love money.

With that said, GCF is very generous. As a whole, you gave a lot of money to the church last year.

But we all need to be careful.

1 Timothy 6:10 (ESV) — 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Furthermore, we can all grow in generosity. How, by really believing the words of Jesus.

Luke 6:38 (ESV) — 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

Give to a friend in need.

If you are a landlord consider giving your tenants free rent for a month.

Give your employees a bigger bonus than they deserve.

Give to the GCF benevolence fund.

Give to the GCF building fund.

Consider upping your weekly or monthly contribution to GCF. If you gave 11 percent last year, give 13 percent this year. You can't out give God. We worship God as we give God our money, because we are showing God that we love him more than money.

Working too much may also be an indicator that we love money too much. When we work too much, we don't have time for the things that really matter; family, service in the church, serving others, working on our marriage, hanging out with non-Christians, and reading good Christian books, etc....

What is the negative command? Don't love money!

How about the positive command? Be content!

Hebrews 13:5-6 (ESV) — 5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." **6** So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Contentment means that we are satisfied with what we have, which means that we don't want more. This is so hard!!! Isn't it?

I recently read an article with this headline:

“Self-Storage: how warehouses for personal junk became a \$38 billion industry.” The article points out that 1 in 11 American pays an average of \$91 a month to store their material overflow of the American Dream. The US has over 50,000 storage facilities, roughly 2.3 billion square feet of rentable space. In 2016 the self-storage industry made 32.7 billion dollars, nearly three times Hollywood's box office revenues. This industry is growing by 8 percent a year.

Disclaimer- there may be legitimate reasons to have self-storage!

What is the point... as a nation we are not content with our stuff. We want more!!!

I'm fascinated by the minimalism fad. I think it is popular because it strikes a nerve in our culture. People are painfully aware of the emptiness of stuff. We all know through experience that stuff does not satisfy. People hope that minimalism will solve their soul's ache. It won't, only Jesus will.

Minimalism accurately diagnoses a problem, but it does not provide the right solution. Having too much stuff will not satisfy and having minimal stuff will not satisfy. Only Jesus will satisfy our souls deepest longings.

This is exactly what our text tells us.

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV) — 5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

We can be content because God, the fountainhead of all joy, will never leave us or forsake us.

If we have Jesus, we have everything we need and more. We need to do more gospel math. Gospel math goes like this, “Jesus plus nothing equals everything.”

1 Timothy 6:6–8 (ESV) — 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

Application:

How should we cultivate contentment this week? Maybe you should consider giving a bunch of your stuff away, destroying your credit cards, and cultivating your relationship with Jesus.

Contentment is an act of worship. When we are content with God alone, we are showing the world and the angels that God is the most valuable thing in the world.

Conclusion:

God has given us a kingdom that can't be shaken. How should we respond? With joyful worship. We can start by worshipping him in the spheres of love, marriage and money. Let's pray...