

Beware Of False Doctrine Part 2

Hebrews 13:10-14

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It's a privilege and honor to open God's word again with you this morning back to the book of Hebrews. If you would turn there to chapter 13.

I thought for a short time of maybe doing a special message for Palm Sunday and Good Friday coming up. Obviously, Resurrection Sunday just around the corner. But as I got into our passage today, this text really leads our heart to the right place this week as we need to think on and remember what Christ has done for us.

Because in our flesh, we're prone to take what we have for granted. We often get overexcited about the next new thing that's on the horizon that we want. We can be convinced that if we just had this or that, our life would be more full. We would have more joy. We'd be more comfortable.

We do this, of course, with trivial things like phones and cars and houses. But also, we're tempted to do this with things of much greater significance like spouses and children. We think that if I just had this or if I could just make it to this life stage, then I will be content. Then, I will be satisfied.

The older you are, the more you know how untrue that really is. The truth is, when God sometimes graciously gives us that thing that we've been wanting, we find ourselves very soon taking for granted that new thing that's been given to us as our eyes move to something new.

But as we think about the Scriptures, they call us to essentially live life from the opposite perspective of what I've just described. While the Scriptures don't condemn wholesome desires for things that God has given us to enjoy in this life, the Scriptures call us to live from a settled place of contentment, a settled place of gratitude.

The truth is, when we see our lives rightly from a biblical perspective, all we see is the goodness of God and the faithfulness of God and how we have far more than we could ever imagine and how God has never left us but only ever perfectly provided for our needs.

And among the things that God has provided for us, the chief of those is Himself. The giver is the ultimate gift. God is the goal. He has expressed His love toward us, of course, chiefly in His Son, that He has given His own Son, the blood of Christ spilled for us, a sacrificial death of Christ to pay for our sins.

Of all the things that we must not take for granted, Christians, we cannot take for granted our Savior. We cannot take for granted the superior sacrifice that He has given for us. That's where the author of Hebrews leads our heart this morning, to remember again, to be refreshed in our gratitude for our Savior and His sacrifice.

This fits perfectly with the overarching theme of the letter as a whole, **The Superiority of Christ**, and it fits perfectly with these corporate applications that we've been looking at, these practices, seven of them that we've seen so far in chapter 13. **Brotherly Love, Intentional Hospitality, Compassionate Care, Marital Honor, Contented Trust, Faithful Imitation.** These are all things that we ought to practice as believers whose faith is grounded in the superior Christ.

And last week, we began a discussion of a seventh practice, **Reject Error**. And this begins in verse nine, but the argument runs all the way through verse 14, where we'll be this morning. Let's read our passage together, beginning in verse nine:

"9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. 10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

We began last week to unpack this wonderful theme, **Reject false teaching, and cling to Christ no matter the cost**. We saw the first part of that theme last week in verse nine, reject false teaching, and today we'll see the end of that theme, to cling to Christ no matter the cost.

As I mentioned last Sunday, the structure here of this section is the command, the argument, and the response. Last time we looked at **The Command: to Beware of False Doctrine**. Let me just quickly remind you again of the flow of thought from verse seven, eight, and nine.

- In verse seven we were told to remember your leader's teaching and imitate their faith.
- From there, in verse eight, we're told that the Jesus those teachers proclaimed and trusted has not changed and never will.
- And then last week we got the conclusion, therefore, do not be led astray by false doctrine. Remember what you were taught, cling to the Christ you were taught, and do not be led astray.

Now today, beginning in verse 10, we have the argument for that command. Why should we be aware of false doctrine? Well, here's **The Argument: Rest in Christ's Sacrifice**. Rest in Christ's sacrifice.

Now as we begin verse 10, I do want to mention quickly that this section that we're about to look at, verses 10 to 14, is one of the more debated sections in Hebrews. This is probably one of the most difficult sections to interpret. There are differing opinions on a number of different things in these verses.

And any time that we come to a debated passage, it's very tempting to get lost in the weeds of the arguments back and forth and really miss the whole point that the author's making. We want to avoid that temptation this morning. What I'm going to do is give you, after

studying this as deeply as I can, my conclusions based on the context of what the author is saying to us.

I will mention a couple of the different views. But what I really want us to do is keep our focus on the big idea. Because the big idea is very clear.

While we may debate some of the finer points of these verses, what the author is getting across is an explanation of why we should be strengthened by grace, as we saw last week, and why we should reject any attempt to add legalistic works to the grace of the gospel.

So why is that? Well he begins here in verse 10 by saying, "*we have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.*" Now on the surface, if you're just kind of reading through this section in your normal Bible reading and not paying as close of attention as you might if you were studying it deeply, this statement might seem out of place.

It might seem as if he has completely shifted gears from verse nine to verse 10. But actually, as we dive into this, we will see it fits perfectly with where we've been and it ushers us into where we're going later in verse 15. Remember, in the context, these are Jewish believers, but they're living their lives surrounded by Jewish unbelievers who are still living under the law.

And the Christians are being persecuted. At this time, the Jews are not. And anytime that begins to happen, we grow weary in our faith because the road gets difficult that God has called us to walk. We're tempted to maybe wonder if we missed something. Maybe I didn't do something that God wanted me to do and that's why this is happening. Or maybe I need to do something new that God desires and if I can figure out what that is, my life will go back to being comfortable and easy.

We can all be tempted to think that. That's certainly a temptation these believers are facing. And while we can't be dogmatic here, because of the mention of the altar, it may have been that one of the potential temptations they were facing was thinking that maybe there was still some value in the sacrificial altar of the Jewish system, that ongoing daily sacrifice that was happening at the temple.

After all, that's a fallacy that still captures people's attention today. As human beings, when we do something wrong, we like the idea of having a way to go and immediately do something to make it right. We like the idea of this, I can go to a place and they can make a sacrifice so they can do this thing and now I feel clean from what I just did.

This is the dangerous false doctrine of Catholicism with the mass, this idea that we are re-sacrificing Christ every time we take the mass. This is heresy. It undermines the gospel of grace, but it does highlight our temptation.

We like that idea, but the gospel of grace has been clearly presented to us here in Hebrews. This is the true gospel. Hebrews 9, beginning in verse 24:

"24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is

not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.”

Remember, as we studied that passage months ago, we learned that one of the main reasons that Jesus is so superior to everything under the Old Covenant is this once-for-all sacrifice. Jesus paid it all on the cross, and it was done. Never to be undone, never to be redone. It was a once-for-all, single sacrifice.

But the temptation may have been for these Jewish Christians to be swayed by Jewish family, Jewish friends. You can see how this happens. We experience these things in our life over the Thanksgiving table, or over the Christmas table, as we begin to talk about ideas.

Maybe they were having discussions like, you know, where's your altar? You guys don't even have an altar. Where's the ongoing sacrifice for your sins? We can see how conversations like that may have played out. And that leads the author here to say, Christians, we have an altar.

In fact, we have an altar that is better than every altar that's ever existed under the Old Covenant. We have an altar from which those who serve at the tabernacle have no right to eat. Now, let's make some observations about that statement.

First of all, notice the verb is in the present tense. We have an altar. That is, there's a continuing nature to this. There's an altar that we have that has this continual benefit to us.

Secondly, he describes the altar as one in which the priests who serve at the temple or tabernacle are not allowed to eat from. Now, a couple of alternate views that I don't believe are here would be some commentators have taken this altar to be sort of a spiritual, heavenly altar. Others have seen a reference here to communion, as if when we take of communion we are somehow coming to this altar. Neither of those views, in my opinion, hold any real sway.

As we look at the text itself and the context, I hold a third view that is a common view that the altar is a reference to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. This was a one-time sacrifice that has ongoing implications for us as believers. And this reference to the priests not being able to eat of this sacrifice is a correlation that's being made between the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

As you study the sacrifices in the book of Leviticus that were commanded under the Old Covenant, what you find is that most of those sacrifices dictated that they were to be eaten. A portion of the sacrifice was to be given to the Lord. A portion was to be given to the priest who was serving there. And a portion was to be given to the one who was making the sacrifice. The sacrifices largely were to be eaten.

But there was one sacrifice particularly in which case that was not true. And this was the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Don't forget about the Day of Atonement. We spent a lot of time in the previous chapters in Hebrews talking about this special day. This was the special one-time annual event in which the high priest alone was able to go into the holy of holies, the most holy portion of the tabernacle and there he would offer sacrifice for his sins and also for the sins of the people.

The author's bringing our minds back to that wonderful event under the Old Covenant to show us what it really pointed to in the New Covenant and he's going to apply it to us here this morning. And the result should be that we never again take for granted what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. That never again will we be tempted to put up any other sacrifice or altar against this one that is the sacrifice of our Savior.

Under Jewish law, the priests were not allowed to eat the meat from the bull and the goat for atonement and the author is saying that we as Christians also have a sacrifice of which they are not allowed to eat that correlates to that one. Only that the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were just a shadow of what was to come. They are a shadow of the altar of the cross on which Jesus gave His life blood.

Now the reason I believe this is a clear correlation to the Day of Atonement is not only because of what's said here in verse 10, but because of what's said in verse 11. If you go on to verse 11, he says "*For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin are burned outside the camp.*" Now here it is, this is a clear reference to what happened only on the Day of Atonement.

And in stating this, he's setting us up for the ultimate point that he's going to drive home and prove to us here in just a moment. We have to understand something about these sacrifices. They were not only unique because they were not to be eaten, they were also unique in the sense that the carcasses of the bull and the goat were to be taken outside of the camp, outside of the city or the camp where the people of Israel were and to then be burned outside the city walls.

This is Leviticus 16, verses 27 and 28:

27 But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. 28 Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp.

Speaking of those verses, R.T. Frantz says this: "The implication is that as sin offerings, the carcasses were now unclean (these offerings, unlike others, were not to be eaten by priests or people) and that uncleanness must be kept away from the purified people of God."

So here was the symbolism on the Day of Atonement. The people, because of the sacrifice of that animal, had now been cleansed, sanctified, if you will, made holy, but now the sins of the people having been placed on the animal, the animal now becomes unclean and must be taken out of the camp.

So you have this separation of the cleansed people and the sacrifice that has become unclean to the point that the person who had the job of burning the flesh of those sacrifices also became unclean and had to go through a ritual ceremonial process to enter back into the camp.

And so you see this separation, clean, unclean, and this brings us to the real point that he's driving home. Here's why he's saying that we as Christians have an altar that is superior to the altar of the Day of Atonement.

Look back at the passage, verse 12:

"12 Therefore (that is because of this, in light of this) Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate."

Now in this one statement is so crammed full of the glorious gospel that we hold dear. We can't really do it justice. It's not possible to fully unpack all that is here in the richness of this one statement. But we're going to do our best.

What the author is saying is that Jesus was the real fulfillment of what the shadow on the Day of Atonement pointed to. They were realized in Christ. The Day of Atonement under the Old Covenant was an annual reminder of the need for forgiveness, the need for atonement. And they had to do it over and over again, year after year, realizing it didn't really work the year before, not in any lasting way, because here we are doing it again.

But Jesus, once and for all, really did atone for sins. Satisfied. You see, this is the heart of the gospel. Often, we focus on the idea of forgiveness for our sins, which is also at the heart of the gospel. But it's more than just forgiveness. It's not as if God said, okay, I forgive you. It's more than that. That forgiveness has a basis.

And the basis is what we call propitiation. It's a word that means the perfect satisfaction of the wrath of God. The reason, the basis for our forgiveness is because our sins have been paid for in full. This is what Jesus did on the cross. This is the correlation. The atonement that was long awaited, that was symbolized on the Day of Atonement, was now realized and actualized.

This is why Paul says in Romans 3:23-25:

"23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (That is, as a satisfaction of the wrath of God) in His blood through faith."

So then, in Christ, our sins are not merely covered. They're not merely forgotten. They are perfectly, eternally atoned for. This is the gospel. So Jesus, in that sense, took our place, stood in our place positively when He lived a perfect life that we failed to live. And then He stood in our place in the negative sense by dying on the cross, taking on Himself the wrath of God that was rightfully ours. And He is our representative then, our substitute in both senses.

Just take the four phrases in this verse and let's break them down. You have an opening statement, *therefore Jesus also*. That's phrase number one. He is here tying in the

correlation that he just made with the Day of Atonement. And then he gives us three descriptive phrases of what Jesus did. And in these three descriptive phrases we have the goal of His sacrifice, the substance of His sacrifice, and the means of His sacrifice.

Notice first of all that **the goal** of His sacrifice in verse 12 is **Sanctification of His people**. The goal, the ultimate goal, is the glory of God, but through sanctification of His people. *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people.*

The only difference between the sacrifice of Christ and the Day of Atonement is that Christ actually did what those sacrifices only pointed to. Through Christ, people who were once characterized through and through by wickedness and sin and rebellion are now characterized through and through by God's grace as righteous, justified in the eyes of God because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to them. This is the great goal of the cross that Christ accomplished for us.

God redeeming a people for Himself that He had set in eternity past, before the world began. But what about the **Substance** of that sacrifice? The substance is also amazing. It was **Shedding of His Blood**. Notice that next phrase. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people *through His own blood.*

Both sacrifices, the Day of Atonement and Christ on the cross, were bloody ordeals. There's no way around the blood when we come to a sacrifice. The difference is whose blood was sacrificed. It was no animal that stood in our place. It was Jesus Christ, the crown jewel of heaven, the very Son of God, the creator of the universe who made you and me, who took on human flesh. He gave His own blood. Notice the emphasis, His own blood.

And it's not the physical substance of the blood itself, as if blood has some magical properties. The reason the blood is so significant is because God declared that it would be the blood of the sacrifice that represented the life being given in the place of the one who made the sacrifice. So Leviticus 17:11 says this:

“11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

That's a little bit of a roundabout way to say the blood represents the life, and in this case, the life of Christ. So, in shedding His own blood, He makes atonement for His people because He gives His life in the place of His people.

Our high priest, the perfect lamb of God, spilling His own blood. It's unthinkable. We get so used to this, don't we? Our whole faith is built on this, and yet it is unthinkable that God would become flesh and spill His blood for you and me. Just let it wash over you again, anew. It really is mind-boggling. It causes us to identify with the words of that famous hymn.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me who caused his pain? For me who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? How can it be?

May we never take it for granted. Of all the things, take your phone for granted, take your house for granted, take your dog for granted, take everything else for granted, but never, Christian, take for granted the precious blood of the Savior that was poured out for you.

Never get over it. Every day of our lives, may it wash over us anew. I am forgiven because I'm washed in the blood of Christ that satisfied the wrath of God for me. Nothing is better news than this.

This is why Paul would say it in such beautiful language in Philippians 2:5-8, when he commands:

"5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

That last phrase, even death on a cross, sets us up well for the third phrase, or at least the fourth phrase, the third descriptive phrase in this verse, verse 12, **The Means, Suffering as an Outcast.** The means of His sacrifice, suffering as an outcast. Notice he goes on to say, therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, *suffered outside the gate.*

Now that phrase, outside the gate, is drawing the correlation between the Day of Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Remember it said that that carcass of that animal was to be taken outside the camp to be burned. And the author here is inspired to say that there is symbolism in the death of Christ that correlates to that going outside the camp because we know that Jesus, on that terrible and yet wonderful day, was led outside the city walls of Jerusalem to be crucified. In that way, He went outside the camp.

We see that this happened in accordance with the perfect plan of God, that the Father fulfilled His eternal plan exactly as He always intended to do at exactly the right time in history. Galatians 4:4-5 says:

"4 But when the fullness of the time came (that's a way of saying at the perfect ordained moment that God had ordained in eternity past), God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

And isn't it interesting that in God's estimation, the fullness of time came at a point in human history in which crucifixion was a popular means of execution. I think if we think it through, it's hard to imagine a more horrific way to die than crucifixion. It was designed to torture and shame a person, not just physically, but emotionally.

Not only was the person, of course, stripped of their clothing and then beaten publicly with a whip that was usually, as it was in Jesus' case, tethered together with pieces of what amount to shrapnel to tear apart the flesh of that person. They were then led out, really used publicly where people could see them, often carrying the cross beam of the cross on which they would be executed. As we know, Jesus did.

All the while being ridiculed by the people, spit on by the people. In Jesus' case, He went to a specific place, Golgotha. We usually say Golgotha. Golgotha is the proper pronunciation. A public place in which passers-by would see Him hanging there on the cross, beaten beyond recognition, stripped so that He would be shamed, dying, excruciating, slow, painful death.

This is not just a historical reference that He suffered outside the gate. This is to bring up in our minds the horror of that day in which the King of Glory took on Himself not just physical punishment, but the very wrath of the Father. This was the symbolism realized. That carcass of the animal on the Day of Atonement was treated as ceremonially unclean.

In the same way, the Son of God was despised and forsaken of men. He was rejected, treated as unclean. Even God the Father, in that moment as the sky grew dark, poured out His own wrath on His Son and treated Jesus on the cross as if He had committed our sin when in fact He had never sinned a day in His life.

He too was forsaken, despised. This is why Paul describes the great exchange this way in 2 Corinthians 5:2:

“21 He (the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Remember that crucifixion was reserved for the worst of the worst. Culturally speaking, if you walked by and saw someone hanging on a cross, you were to expect that that's a bad guy. That's the scum of the earth right there. Only the worst of the worst are allowed to die in that way. Roman citizens aren't even to be crucified, which is likely why Paul was beheaded rather than being crucified because of his citizenship.

But I want you to see the correlation here. This all ties back to what we started studying last Sunday. We were told that we were to be strengthened by grace, not by legalistic works. How do we strengthen our hearts with grace? By focusing our attention on what Christ has done for us. When we think of the payment, the cost, the perfect sacrifice, when you think of all that Jesus has done for you, Christian, on the cross, what is there left for you to do? What is there left for you to add to such a sacrifice? What would you ever bring to God that would rival what the Son has done for you? Jesus has paid it all.

Listen to the way that Paul describes what Christ has done in Colossians 2:13-14:

“13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Don't you see how unfitting, how utterly ridiculous it is then to think that we could ever add any righteous work to what Christ has already done? So the key to strengthening your heart with grace then, is to remind yourself of the superior sacrifice of the Savior that's already been applied to you. Remember the height from which He began and the glories of heaven. Remember His incarnation and taking on flesh. Remember His perfect sinless life. Remember His sacrificial death. And then remember, as we'll rejoice in next week, His glorious resurrection, which stands as a seal from the Father that He accepts this sacrifice from the Son. There's nothing left to add.

And if you're here this morning and you're not in Christ, I want you to understand that what you just heard is the pure and true gospel. This is the good news. When we talk about the gospel being good news, this is the good news, that though we are sinners who truly and rightly deserve the wrath of God, the Son of God has taken on Himself what we deserved.

He has offered His own perfect life. He has spilled His blood to pay for all of our sins. And then He rose again from the grave, proving that the Father accepted His sacrifice.

All that's left to do is to be saved by grace through faith, to humble yourself, repenting of your sins, and putting your faith in Jesus Christ alone as your only hope for salvation. And you will be saved. This is the good news of the gospel.

Don't ever fall into a trap of thinking that the gospel has anything to do with you doing good works or being good enough. It has everything to do with Christ being good enough and giving His life for us.

So how would we respond to such things? What should this evoke in us? Well, verse 13 and 14 gives us the response. We've had the command. We've seen the argument and now the response. And **The Response** is simply **Identify With Christ's Reproach**. Identify with Christ's reproach. He says in verse 13:

"13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

And with that statement, the author's connection between the sacrifice of Christ and the circumstance in which these Jewish Christians are living, it comes full circle. We see the connection, the application. What has tempted them to think that maybe they need to hold on to the altar of the Jewish faith. Maybe they need to add some kind of legalistic works to what they're doing is this persecution. The difficulties of their circumstances following Christ has become costly. Their faith is being tested.

And the author's solution is to remind them of how precious and costly the sacrifice of Christ was for their sin. And then to encourage them to be willing to go outside the camp to identify themselves with Jesus freely regardless of the cost. That means be willing to suffer with the Savior who has suffered to make you His own. They were to bear His reproach in their culture by leaving the ways of Judaism knowing that in separating themselves they would become a target for persecution. Leave the old way and identify with Christ.

After all, Jesus told us it would be this way, John 15:18-19:

"18 If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. If the world hates you, you know that it's hated me before it hated you."

Now that was the application to the people at the time, but what about in our context? We live in a very different context, do we not? We are not persecuted in that same way. There are certainly cultures in our world where persecution is real, where to become a Christian is immediately to lose your family, to put your life at danger and physical harm. We have missionaries serving in such places.

So it's not that persecution has gone away, but in God's grace and providence we live in a country where we have religious freedom. We don't fear legal ramifications as of yet for our faith. And we praise God for that. May we not waste that, by the way, but use that freedom to magnify the name of Christ and to freely preach the gospel to all who will listen.

But this does provide a conundrum because it's actually seen as a good thing still, largely, to identify in some way with the Christian heritage. We see this in politics. No matter what party a person's running for, they try to make some connection to a Christian heritage because that's seen as a good thing. Even if the person really has no interest in religion, they want to be able to put it on the moniker that they have that kind of heritage.

But that brings us to this. In our culture, identifying as a Christian will not usually get you into trouble, but living like one will. In the US, you're free to be a Christian as long as you don't think, speak, or act like one. So, the truth is, we will face opportunities to go outside the camp, as it were, to identify with Christ, and it costs us something. It just is more subtle than it is in other places.

So here's some of the opportunities we have to go outside the camp in our context to sharing the gospel

- when it might damage your reputation or temporal success
- Refusing to compromise God's moral standards for worldly gain
- Maintaining your integrity when it would benefit you in the short term to just go with the flow, let things slide
- Refusing to show favoritism based on worldly standards regardless of how much pressure may come from others to do so
- Standing for the truth in love when your extended family pressures you to compromise clear biblical convictions. This can be a very difficult one when your faith in Christ and not just your faith but your commitment to live out your faith puts you in direct conflict with family members whom you love

These are just some of the ways that we might find ourselves in uncomfortable circumstances having opportunities to go outside the camp to go and identify with Christ though it may cost us.

But notice, as we think about this, the order in which this comes to us. Again, we want to be very careful. The author is not now adding some legalistic work to our life after just telling us that we need to be strengthened by grace.

Remember the order He says, be strengthened in the heart by grace and we do that by meditating on Christ and His perfect satisfaction of God's wrath for us. Then on the basis of that strength that Christ provides go out and be with Him outside the camp. Identify with Him regardless of the cost.

This is the natural overflow of a life filled with love for Christ, a life that realizes what Christ has done, a desire to leave this world and go and to identify with the One who went outside the camp to pay for our sins. When you're strengthened by grace it realigns your value system. All of the sudden you realize the things of this world are fleeting. They really don't have value compared to the things that are ours in our eternal inheritance in Christ.

And that's the idea of verse 14. As He closes out how we should respond he says,: "14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

This is how he encourages our hearts by reminding us that when we go outside the camp, if that costs us things in this temporal life, ultimately we must value the eternal things over these temporal things because there is a city of which we are citizens and it is that city and its King that has our heart and our affections and our allegiance.

It's been this way from the beginning. This is how Jesus describes being a disciple Matthew 16:24-26:

“24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Now that's a passage dealing with the initial call to follow Christ as a disciple but what we see here in Hebrews is that initial call becomes a lifestyle. We go outside the camp to identify with Christ and we stay there. We want to be where He is and if that causes us to be strange to the world or estranged from the world so be it. But I want to be where Christ is. I want to go outside the camp because I love Him. I want to know Him and I want to walk with Him.

When we're strengthened by grace it changes our perspective. New King, New Kingdom, New desires.

So if you want to summarize all that we have learned in verses 9-14 Here's a summary paragraph:

This is a call to be strengthened by God's grace, recalling the superior sacrifice of Christ which paid for your sins in full, and to joyfully identify with Christ though it may cost you worldly goods and relationships, but to do so with hope because our confidence is anchored in Christ and the Kingdom He's promised to us.

This is the truth of these verses. And so as we prepare our heart for communion let's apply these verses in just two ways quickly. Number one **Remember Christ's Superior Sacrifice**. Remember Christ's superior sacrifice. Let me ask you How often when you're weak and you're weary and you're struggling through the day do you turn your mind back to the glories of what Christ has done for you? How often do your meditations land on the cross and the perfect satisfaction of the wrath of God and the resurrection and the joy that we have in such a Savior? This is how we encourage our hearts. This is how we stir up the remembrance of the grace that's been extended to us in Christ.

You know when we think about that phrase in Romans 8 verse 1 that there's now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Understand that that's true not because there's no condemnation for sin. That's true because your sins have already been condemned in Christ and paid in full. That's why there's no more condemnation, because He's done it all. Doesn't that strengthen your heart? It strengthens my heart. It strengthens my heart with the grace of God and it causes us then to walk after Him.

Secondly, **Identify With Christ's Suffering.** Identify with His suffering. This is the natural outflow of having our hearts strengthened, our value system realigned as we look at our Savior. Identify with Christ, even when it's costly. Remember you're trading monopoly money for a real inheritance of real worth. Share the gospel. Live as a true Christian in the workplace. Live as a true Christian in front of your unbelieving family members even when it gets a little awkward. Live with integrity even when that's unpopular. Obey God when it will cost you temporal success and trust God when His plan for your life is difficult to accept and it's hard to understand.

But the call here, Christian is to strengthen your heart by grace and then joyfully obey God by going outside the camp and identifying with your Savior.

Let's pray together. Lord God, we ask that You would help us to apply these things to our own lives. Help us, God, to walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received. Help us to be strengthened and compelled by grace and may that fill our sails with wind to identify with You. Thank You for being rejected and despised for us and for showing us what true love is, what a true treasure is. May we treasure Christ above all else. It's in His name we pray Amen.