

## **Humbly Receive The Truth**

Hebrews 13:22-25

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Well, again, it's good to see you here to worship our Savior. Please take your Bible with me. Turn to Hebrews chapter 13. Hebrews 13.

Early in our marriage, before we had children, Rebecca and I used to enjoy watching a show called The Biggest Loser. Some of you may be familiar with that show. If you haven't seen the show, it's essentially a weight loss reality TV show. The idea is whoever is the biggest loser gets a cash prize at the end of the show.

And so it also happened to coincide with the fact that at that time, we were trying to diet and exercise and watch our health and things like that. And we decided that we would eat super clean throughout the week, but we would allow ourselves one cheat night in which we could eat whatever we wanted to eat.

And so in God's providence, it happened to be that our cheat night fell on the same night that we would watch The Biggest Loser together. So for my cheat night, I'd been waiting all week diligently, you know, you eat through all the carrots and the vegetables and all the things you have to eat to eat healthy, dreaming of what I would eat when I got to eat what I wanted to eat. And so I fixed myself this big bowl of ice cream covered with chocolate and caramel syrup. It was perfectly proportioned. I sat down on the couch with my wife. We turned on the DVR to watch our show.

And as I went to take my first bite of ice cream to my shock, the show started differently than it normally did. And one of the trainers popped up on the screen and began to speak to us at home. And he said, if you're sitting on the couch eating ice cream right now, you're missing the point of this show. And I thought, how does he know? I ate my bowl of ice cream. I'm going to tell you, I waited all week for that bowl of ice cream.

But I thought about that this week because we're coming to the end of our journey through the book of Hebrews. In fact, I was looking back at my notes and it was on November 21st of 2021 that we started this wonderful book. In fact, just if you would raise your hand if you've come to our church since that time, since November. Yeah, so all you have known is our study of this book. It's been a wonderful study. If our records are correct, this should be our 105th sermon in this series. And I pray that it has impacted your life as it has impacted mine.

But what we're going to find this morning is that in these last few verses, the author's heart is that we don't miss the point of what we have studied. That we don't do what James says, where we look in the mirror and we see ourselves only to walk away and forget what we look like. In other words, to see in the mirror of God's word, areas of our life in which we need to grow and change and yet walk away without putting forth any effort towards those things. We can all be tempted to do that, but our author's going to exhort us today not to do that, but to take away the things we ought to take away from this wonderful letter.

Now as we begin, I think it's appropriate that we remind ourselves a little more thoroughly than normal of all that we have seen through this book. Remember the grand theme, it's there on the screen, **The Superiority of Christ**.

And beginning in chapter 1, right out of the gate, the author begins to prove that point. Just remember, as we read through these, some of the key arguments that were made, if you were with us during these studies. Jesus is superior to the prophets and he's superior to the angels. He's even superior, the author says, to Moses, that great key figure in Israel's history, who received the Mosaic law. Jesus is superior, in fact, to the entirety of the priesthood, Aaron and all of those who would follow after him, and even the Old Covenant itself and all of the sacrifices contained in that Old Covenant. All of those millions of animal sacrifices that ultimately, as we saw, pointed to Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of all sacrifices.

Theme of Hebrews: The Superiority of Christ

1. Jesus is Superior to the Prophets (1:1-3)
2. Jesus is Superior to the Angels (1:4-2:18)
3. Jesus is Superior to Moses (3:1-4:13)
4. Jesus is Superior to the Priesthood (4:14-7:28)
5. Jesus is Superior to the Old Covenant and its Sacrifices (8:1-10:18)

The author then went on in chapter 10 to begin applying the superiority of Christ to our lives. And he called us to persevere in our faith and not to stop assembling together but encouraging one another all the more. In chapter 11, we were admonished to remember faithful believers in the past and their faith, the Hall of Faith, example after example of others who by God's grace were preserved and ran well.

In chapter 12, we were given the ultimate example of faith, who is Jesus Christ Himself, who had perfect faith. And we were told there towards the end of the chapter that God loves us like His children to the point that He even disciplines us when we go astray to bring us back into close fellowship with Him, to turn us from sin.

Then, of course, in chapter 13, we've been looking at these corporate applications as a church body, these 11 practices that are to be ours, **brotherly love** and **intentional hospitality, compassionate care, marital honor, contented trust**, and even **faithful imitation** of faithful leaders. We're to **reject error and false doctrine** and live lives characterized by **sacrificial praise** and **sacrificial obedience**. We're to **intentionally submit** to the leaders in our local body and finally to **faithfully pray** for them and for one another.

Then last week, we turned the corner to the final section of chapter 13. In verses 20 and 21, we saw that beautiful benediction, that prayer of blessing. And today we come to parting remarks, the final things the author would say to us as he closes out this wonderful letter. Verses 22 to 25. Let's read our passage together beginning in verse 22:

*"22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. 23 Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. 24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. 25 Grace be with you all."*

Now, as we think about what's said here, if we were to summarize it into a simple statement, the highlights of what he says, here's the theme statement. **We are to humbly take Scripture to heart, love the brethren and continue in grace.** Humbly take Scripture to heart, love the brethren and continue in grace.

And what we're going to do is organize his final words around four parting remarks. Four parting remarks. **Remark Number One: Embrace These Inspired Truths.** Embrace these inspired truths. Verse 22, he begins, *"but I urge you..."* The word urge means to exhort. It could also be encouraged. To strongly urge is the idea. It can even mean to appeal.

What we're going to see is that, as I said in the introduction, the author's heart here is that we respond rightly to all that we've learned, all that he's taught us. And we see that in the command that follows this word "urge". He says *"I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation,"*

Bear with. To bear with means to regard with tolerance. It can be translated as endure, as we'll see in other places here in a moment. And to understand what we're bearing with, just look at the end of the phrase. He says, *"I urge you to bear with (specifically) this word of exhortation."* That means that what he has written here in this letter is an exhortation. From his perspective, this is intended to instruct us, to teach us, not just to grow our knowledge, but to call us to act, to act on the things that he has taught us.

Exhortation is **the act of emboldening another in belief or in action.** And he has sought to embolden us in both, in both our belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and our call to live in a way that reflects our belief in that Lord Jesus Christ.

So the reason that Hebrews reads somewhat differently than other epistles, other letters in the New Testament is because it really functions like a sermon. This is a letter, but it also is a masterpiece. It's a sermon. It's an exegetical, expositional sermon.

Remember, through the bulk of the letter in those first 10 chapters, and even in chapter 11 and so forth, we were looking at Old Testament quotes. He would quote a passage from the Old Testament. Then he would explain and apply that passage over and over again. It's a sermon that we have here. And so we're to bear with this sermon, this exhortation that's been given to us in this letter.

To better understand what it means to bear with an exhortation, I think it's helpful to look at another reference in which the same Greek word is used in the negative sense by the Apostle Paul, and it will help us apply it in the positive sense here in Hebrews. But in 2 Timothy chapter four, listen to what he says to Timothy in verses one and four. He says:

*"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (Now listen to verse three. This is where the word comes up. He says) 3 For the time will come when they will not endure (that's the same word. It could be bear with) sound doctrine; (Now notice the result of not bearing with or enduring sound doctrine) but wanting to have their*

*ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”*

Same Greek word there, endure or bear with. This here is in the negative sense. The outcome, as we saw there in verses three and four, when a person does not endure sound doctrine, what do they do? They essentially close off their ears. They don't want to hear that truth. They reject that truth. They go find teachers who will teach them the things that are more pleasing to their ears that make them feel the way they want to feel.

That is what it looks like to not bear with exhortation. And so what is the positive response then? Obviously, we just take the opposite of that. To bear with or to endure this exhortation is to receive it as true and to submit to what's been taught, to humbly obey what we have learned.

So if we think about the exhortation specifically in the book of Hebrews, what are some of the things he's exhorted us to believe and to do? Well, at the top of the list, of course, he's exhorted us to believe certain things about Jesus, that Jesus is superior to the Old Covenant and to the law. He's exhorted us that we are to live by faith in Christ rather than the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant. He's then explained that this persevering in faith in Christ will necessarily have an effect on the church community as a whole. We're going to look differently if we have faith in this superior Christ. We're going to be marked by things like brotherly love and hospitality and personal care for one another.

So the command then to bear with this exhortation is to receive all of these things that have been taught to us and to submit ourselves to what we have been taught. That begins by shaping our view of Christ. Personally, do you believe that Jesus Christ is superior, that He is the only one worthy of your hope to set your hope on Him for salvation and eternal redemption? Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the sacrifice above all sacrifices, that He paid for sins once and for all? Our sins are forgiven in Christ by grace through faith, past, present, and future. Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus even now is seated at the right hand of God as we've been taught, that He is the priest above all priests, that He ministers even now on behalf of us as His people, that He intercedes for us unceasingly, meaning not only does He sympathize with our weaknesses in the sense that He understands, but He's eager and willing to help us in our time of need? Do you believe that?

That's the idea of bearing with these truths, to receive them as true and then have our lives affected by those truths. So if you would say yes and amen to all of those truths, then the follow-up admonition is live out the implications of those truths. May our lives be transformed by such things.

So in summary form then, **To Bear with The Word of God is simply to humbly embrace it as the authoritative word of God, submitting to its instruction in thought, word, and deed.**

The opposite, **To Not Bear with The Word, is to close our ears and our minds to the truth, squelching the warnings of our conscience so that we may continue thinking and living in accordance with our own wisdom and desires.**

Now as we think about this more personally, I think it's appropriate that we ask the question, what is it that often tempts us to not bear with God's word? What is it that tempts us to harden our heart and to push back when God's word challenges us? Well at the heart, if we really peel back the layers, it's really an issue of idolatry. When we don't bear with the word of God, the heart problem boils down to the fact that God's word is asking us to believe or do something we don't want to believe or do. That's what's happening.

So if you want to get to the heart of why maybe you're struggling with a certain teaching in Scripture that's clearly there, or you're struggling with certain commands of Scripture, then ask yourself this, realize this truth that I'm being taught challenges or threatens my fill in the blank. What is it that's being challenged or threatened by this truth in God's word?

- It could be my **comfort**.
- It could be challenging or threatening my **reputation**. Man, if I believe that, do you know what people are going to say about me? Do you know what's going to happen at my work if I live like that?
- Is it challenging or threatening your **desires**? I know the word says I should want this and do this, but the truth is I want this and I want to do this. And the word's challenging me to forsake my desires.
- What about **society's values**? I can't believe what the Bible says about that, but the whole society believes something else. They call that ignorant. I don't want to be ignorant in the eyes of the world.
- It challenges maybe **inherited traditions**. We've always done it that way. My mom and dad did it that way, and their mom and dad did it that way. My denomination, it's always done it that way. What do you mean it's not supposed to be done that way?
- It challenges or threatens my **personal perspective**. Maybe you personally have wrangled with a doctrine or a truth and you've come to a conclusion only to come to a passage that threatens that conclusion. And suddenly you realize, uh-oh, maybe I was wrong, and this is challenging me. It's rubbing up against my personal perspective that I've held so dearly.

But that really is the issue. So ask yourself, if something is taught and you look at the Scripture, and sure enough, that's what the Word says, or you're reading the Bible, and clearly this is what the Word says, and it grates against you, something inside of you doesn't want to believe that or do that, then ask the question, what is it that I'm valuing in this moment that's being threatened by what I just heard or what I just read? That will reveal the idol that must be confessed and forsaken.

But the point is bear with this word of exhortation. Perceive it, believe it, and live in accordance with it. Now, to back that up, he actually gives a supporting statement here in verse 22. He says:

*"But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly."*

Now, some of you may raise an eyebrow to that and say, really, this is brief? I can't imagine what a long letter would be like. Estimates are that if we were to just read aloud the book of Hebrews in its entirety, it would take roughly an hour to do that.

And so what that means is, that's actually what would have happened. This letter would have been received and someone would have stood, the messenger probably who brought it, and read it to the congregation aloud. And so if I'm reading this right, that means my sermons are not long, okay? That's what I'm taking away from it. He says an hour was brief, okay? So I'm going to start bumping it up to an hour and a half, two hours.

But in all seriousness, what does he mean? Why even add this statement? I think it's doing two things. One, it's highlighting the fact that there's much more that could be said. When we're talking about the superiority of Christ and the redemption that Christ has secured for us, 13 chapters doesn't even scratch the surface.

And I think that's what he's getting at, is there's much more that can be said and there's much more that he intends to say, because he is leading us to a **Second Remark** here, which is **Prepare For A Visit**. He wants them to be prepared for him to come in person. Look back at verse 23. He says:

*"Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you."*

First of all, notice this reference to Timothy. While we can't be dogmatic, I think it's almost certainly a reference to the Timothy that we all know, who Paul wrote two letters to, the traveling companion of Paul, his protege and disciple.

Apparently, these people knew Timothy personally as well because he doesn't just call him my brother, but our brother. And so perhaps Timothy even had visited them before. And the fact that he mentions Timothy's release leads us to believe that Timothy likely had been imprisoned, probably for his faith, as an outbreak of the persecution that we've talked about that was going on in the context behind Hebrews.

But now, thankfully, he's been released. They should give thanks for that. But this actually ends up being an encouragement for us if we just think back a little bit to what we know about Timothy and the things that Paul writes to Timothy.

Because specifically in Paul's second letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy, we see Paul writing what we would say is Paul's final farewell letter. Paul is in prison. He believes that he'll be executed very soon. 2 Timothy is Paul passing the torch to Timothy. And he warns Timothy on multiple occasions to stand firm, that persecution and difficulty are coming. As we read earlier, Timothy, preach the word in season and out of season.

Look at another example in 2 Timothy 3, verses 12 to 15. He says:

*"12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (What's he saying? Timothy, hold on, persecution is coming) 13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

And then in the next chapter, he goes on to say, preach the word. So what I want you to see is there's an encouragement here for us because the fact that Timothy's now been released from prison means he took Paul's words to heart and he did it. He kept preaching. He was faithful, even in the face of persecution, even in the face of being imprisoned for his faith.

It encourages us to hold on, to continue serving regardless of the circumstances. But the big note here, really, in verse 23 is that the author's planning to come see them face to face. He says:

*"with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you."*

Apparently, the author's hoping to come and visit them personally with Timothy at his side, but he's eager to get there. And what it says here is that if Timothy doesn't make it soon, he's going to come without him because he's dead set on coming to see these Christians. It's a reminder that there's a personal relationship here between the author and this group of people and that he genuinely is concerned for them.

So historically, in the context, this is probably how this went. The author heard of the situation amongst these Christians, the struggles they're having. He immediately sits down and does what he can do right away. He writes out this letter. He writes out a letter to encourage them, and he sends a messenger, Get this to them as fast as you can. But that's not enough. He's not going to leave it at the letter, which I believe is what he's getting at with I've spoken to you briefly or written to you briefly. He's got more to say, and he's going to make the effort and pay the expense to get there in person and to love them enough to teach them in the truth and to help them be strengthened in their faith.

This is a reminder and encouragement for us to fan into flame our love for one another, our care. When we know definitively or to suspect that another brother or sister is struggling in their faith, walking through difficult times, that should stir up within us proactive concern to want to come alongside them.

By the way, this is all throughout the scripture. Listen to Paul's heart for the church and for people who are struggling in their faith. 2 Corinthians 11, 27 to 29. He says:

*"27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. (He says, one of the daily burdens I have is I'm genuinely concerned for the churches. And then he says this) 29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?"*

Paul's saying, It matters to me what happens in the body. It matters to me when a believer is struggling. That pricks my heart to want to pray for them and to come alongside them and to help strengthen them in their faith. And of course, he tells us to follow in his footsteps in Galatians 6.

*"1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. "*

The takeaway then, from verse 23, is that it's biblical to be proactively concerned for one another in the body. In this local body. To care when we see each other struggling and to

express that concern and to be willing to come alongside. This letter apparently for the author was just an appetizer. He was planning to come himself and to be with them and to see them face to face.

I do want to stop and say here, I'm not seeking to read too much into the passage, but I do think it's worth noting that there is value in face-to-face ministry. There's value in spending time physically with one another. That's different. You know, we are blessed in our day and age to have some of the technology that we have and praise God, we can immediately send each other a message. We can immediately give a call or an email or even jump on a Zoom call and even see each other. We should use those tools to their maximum capacity, but we should never forsake being together face to face. Those things are not the same.

I mean, let's be honest. The content of Hebrews, have you ever written a letter or a text or an email that rivals anything in this book? I know that I haven't. If there was ever a written document that should be sufficient to just send, this is it. And yet he says, I've just written to you briefly. Don't worry, I'm coming as fast as I can. I'm hoping Timothy can come, but if he doesn't get here, I'm coming. Why? Because I want to be with you in person. My heart is concerned for you and I want to see you and I want you to see me and I want to sit with you.

It's an encouragement to us not to lose the importance of that face-to-face interaction, body language, tone of voice, facial expression, a warm handshake, a brotherly hug, to pray face to face with another person for them with your hand on their shoulder. There's something different about that than a text message. And so, prioritize one another to the point that we're willing to be inconvenienced, to spend time together. Show up, drop by, get together for coffee. Don't stop sending texts and cards and emails. Those things are wonderful, but don't let them replace face to face ministry.

So as we think about this verse, then we should be emboldened by Timothy's faith to stand firm for the gospel even in the face of persecution. And we should be encouraged to love one another and prioritize each other even to the point of not just the written word, but face to face interaction.

That brings us to a third remark here in these closing words. **Remark Number Three: Greet All the Brethren.** Greet all the brethren. Verse 24:

*"Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you"*

Now this is a simple greeting. It's what we would expect. It's what we find in most of the letters in the New Testament. And yet there are a few key things we want to make note of here. First of all, this is the third mention of church leaders just in chapter 13. In verse seven, he called them to remember their past faithful leaders. In verse 17, remember, he called them to submit to their current church leaders. And now here in verse 24, he gives a specific special greeting to the leaders of that church. There is likely personal relationship there and it fits with the instruction he's given earlier in the chapter.

But what's of special note is when he turns his attention to the rest of the congregation. Because notice the title that he calls them by. In verse 24, *greet all of your leaders and all*



*the saints*. All the saints. Now there's theology dripping from that title. This instructs us on how we're to think about every believer, every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It also instructs us about what a saint is. There's a lot of influence in our culture, primarily from Roman Catholicism, this idea that saint, to be a saint is a special category that only certain believers attain to. But the Bible doesn't teach that.

The Bible teaches that every true Christian can legitimately be called a saint. Listen to Paul in Acts 9.13. This is Ananias as he's told to go and to see Saul who's just been converted:  
*"But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;'"*

Referring to all the believers in Jerusalem. The word saint is built off of the Greek word for holy. The idea is the word saint means holy ones. There's theology in that. Why can every Christian be called a holy one? It's because, not because of our own intrinsic holiness, it is because this is what justification is. To be a Christian is to put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by grace, His righteousness is imputed to you and to me so that God can legitimately see us forever as holy, not because of our holiness but because of Christ's holiness in our place that's now been credited to us and our sin has been credited to Him on the cross.

This is why Paul says this in 1 Corinthians. Now before I read this, remember about the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth was a mess and there were some sins that these people were dealing with that were high level, big level sins even in our culture today. They would be shocking and yet listen to what he says in 1 Corinthians 1:2:  
*"2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:"*

Even in Corinth he says the true believers there gathered in the church in Corinth are sanctified. They are saints that is they've been set apart unto God as holy. The righteousness of Christ has been applied to them. It's in that sense then that all of us can rightly be referred to if we're in Christ as saints. That will forever be a gracious reality because we are covered by grace through faith with the righteousness of Christ.

If you think about it that term saint is an appropriate celebration and application of what's been taught in the book of Hebrews because one of the key themes of Hebrews is the sufficient sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ was superior because it accomplished eternal redemption. The forgiveness of sins past, present, and future. And so it is he calls them saints.

There's one final greeting here a mention of certain Italian believers sending a greeting *those from Italy greet you*. Now believe it or not there's actually quite a bit of debate about this in commentaries. Commentators like to debate about things. This is one of those. Unfortunately, it's one of those debates that can't be finally resolved because all we have is what I just read. That's all we have to go off of. Really there are two options.

The debate is over is the author in Italy writing to believers outside of Italy or is the author outside of Italy writing to believers in Italy. It's one of those two things most likely. So option one the author is currently somewhere in Italy with a group of Italian Christians and he's sending his greeting to this local church outside of Italy.

Or option two the church receiving the letter made up of Jewish Christians primarily is located in Italy and a group of Italians who don't live there anymore who are with the author send their greetings back to them as well. As fun as it is to speculate about such things and much ink has been spilled on these things we can't definitively say one way or the other. If you made me choose, I would choose option number two because I think it makes the most sense but these are not things to be dogmatic about.

But even in this what do we take from that phrase *those from Italy greet you*. Well, I think there's brotherly affection there. It shows that it's not just the author who's been concerned about these Christians but his companions with him too.

Likely they've been praying together for these believers who are struggling in their faith and so these Italian Christians may have been personally familiar with the church and they're sending their greetings as well as a way of showing brotherly love and care.

Now that brings us to the final statement. **Remark Number Four: Go With God's Grace.** Go with God's grace. He ends the letter:

*"Grace be with you all."*

Grace be with you all. Now if you've read the New Testament all you know this is not an uncommon way of speaking. It is common. It's very Pauline. Paul uses it regularly. Some form of grace be with you grace to you. Sometimes at the beginning of the letter sometimes at the end of a letter. And because it's so familiar and so brief it's easy to just kind of read it and blow by it and we go on to the next book. But we don't want to do that because there actually is theology here as well.

This is a distinctly Christian salutation. It is filled with Christian truth. It's a reminder of what we as believers are all in constant need of. The grace of God. It's also a reminder that what we are in need of is constantly supplied by God. He constantly gives His grace to us.

We not only need saving grace we need sustaining grace. After all, what confidence do we have that our salvation is going to be preserved to the end? What confidence do we have that we're not going to be ripped from the hand of the Father and eternally lost? The confidence is God's grace extended to us in Christ. It's because grace is with us in Christ.

In the context of Hebrews this simple salutation takes on an especially encouraging tone because he's proven to us that we are safe in Christ because of this redemption. Listen to how a couple of commentators refer to this phrase here at the end of the book. This is Philip Hughes. He says: "The source of this grace is the throne of grace where divine assistance is ever available to us in the hour of necessity and strength to enable us to overcome every assault of the enemy and to persevere to the end."

Matthew Henry, the famous commentator, writes: "Let the favor of God be towards you and His grace continually working in you and with you bringing forth the fruits of holiness as the first fruits of glory."

Christian, what we need is grace. It's important that we think that way throughout the day. What we need is saving grace, sanctifying grace, preserving grace, and in Christ it has been given to us by faith. This grace then becomes the lifeblood of our daily life.

What do we live by? Grace. Grace. How are we going to ever grow in holiness? Grace. How are we one day going to be glorified and brought to be with God in His very physical presence? Grace. How do we know that's going to last forever? Grace. And it's been secured for us eternally by the superior Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all.

Let me ask you, have you come to be a recipient of this grace? Have you personally come to know the eternal redemption that's offered by the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you understood your need for such salvation because of your sin? That your sin separates you from the Holy God who made you and you can't do a thing to save yourself or reconcile yourself with Him on your own. You have no good thing to offer Him to say, listen, I'm a good person and I deserve to be with you forever. You have nothing.

But Christ has done what we could not. He lived a perfect life and He died on the cross offering that perfect life as a sacrifice to the Father and God raised Him from the dead so that we now know that sacrifice was sufficient, it was received and it is applied to everyone who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, trusting that He alone has done what is needed to be forgiven.

Only on the basis of His sacrifice can we be made right with God. If you're willing today to turn from your sin in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ believing that He has died for you and risen again, you will be saved and you will know this eternal sustaining, saving grace.

And if you're already in Christ, then you already have the benefit of this grace. Live in accordance with such grace. Pursue sanctification on the basis of this grace. It is the root of our hope of our very life.

As we think about drawing this to a close, I think it's important to remember we're drawing to a close not only what we've just studied today but the book as a whole. And so I really want to give you what is the primary application? As you think about the book, all 13 chapters, it really boils down to this. **Rest in the superiority of Christ.** Rest in the superiority of Christ. That's the primary theme that we've looked at week in and week out. Resist any temptation to think that you need to add anything or take away anything from what Christ has done.

Recognize He is Lord of all, the very Son of God, seated at the right hand of the Father. And because of that, He should capture our meditations. How often does your mind reflect on your Savior? How often do you meditate on who Christ is and what He's done for you? The Hebrews should cause us to have minds and hearts filled with this superior Christ. His redemption needs no amendments, no additions. It is perfect. It is eternal.

And so the result then should be a people who love Him, who rest in Him and what He's done, and who long to praise Him, worship Him, and proclaim Him to anyone who will listen.

Secondly, as we think about specifically what we've learned today, **Humbly Submit To God's Word**. Humbly submit to God's Word. Both what is exhorted to us here in Hebrews, but this is an application that goes to all of God's inspired word. The word of God should challenge us. I mean, just think about it. These are the inspired words of the living God, the eternal God, the all-knowing, transcendent God. Does it not make sense that at times we should read things that stretch us and challenge us, that blow our minds? Would we expect anything less if this really is the Word of God?

So what that means is when you and I come to a passage and what the passage says is different than what we have previously believed or the way we've previously lived, which one of those things needs to change? The word or you and I? Us. That's what it means to be in submission to the word. It means that when I read it on the pages or I hear it taught and I can see, yes, that's what it says, then my response is yes and amen, and if I need to change, God, give me the grace to change that I may be in submission to your word, but I will not change your word to accommodate what I think or what I want to be true, no matter how hard it is.

If you're tempted this morning or at any point in the future to push back against the clear teaching of Scripture, what you need to do is what we mentioned earlier. Ask yourself, what am I valuing that's being threatened by this passage? And then by God's grace, forsake that thing and choose to submit to your Savior by His grace.

Number three: **Proactively Love God's People**. The author has taught us what it looks like to truly love other Christians. His concern for them led him to speak the truth to them in love, to seek to stir them up to love and good deeds through the word of God. We ought to do the same. It caused him to not only write a letter but to follow that letter personally to come to be with them, to love them and care for them. We ought to do the same, to show up for one another, to be willing to bear one another's burdens and to live life with each other as the body of Christ. May Northlake Bible Church be a church marked by such brotherly love and hospitality and mutual care for each other.

And number four, finally, **Unceasingly Depend On God's Grace**. This is what it all comes down to. Grace be with you all. There are many challenging things in Hebrews. There are hard commands. There are some hard truths and some warnings given in Hebrews that we need to take seriously and yet never at any point does the author tell us to do anything apart from grace.

Everything is bathed in the grace of God. The reason, as we've studied before, that you and I have any hope of obeying the things that have been commanded to us in this letter or anywhere else in Scripture is because daily we are the recipients of the grace of God in Christ and He will strengthen us with that grace to do the things He asks us to do.

So I think it's fitting as we close out this letter to end by reading one section of Hebrews that really, in my opinion, summarizes what we should do with all the truths that we've learned together. Hebrews 4, verses 14 to 16:

*“14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Praise God for our superior Savior and that even now, because of His grace, we can draw near to Him. Let's pray together. Lord God, we're so grateful for this wonderful letter that You chose to be included in Your revelation to us, Your inspired words. We pray, God, that we would heed it, that we would learn from it, that our lives would be transformed by Your Spirit through it for Your glory. We're grateful for these things. Help us to bear with Your word this morning that we receive it and be transformed by it. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.