

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 12, Hebrews 13:1-25: A God-pleasing Response, 6-min. Video Overview

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Alright, let's just jump right in. Have you ever felt like you're being pulled in a million different directions? Like, how are you supposed to live a life that actually means something when the world is constantly pushing back? Well, we're going to dig into some surprisingly practical advice from a really old source, the very last chapter of an ancient sermon called Hebrews. It's basically a roadmap for living with integrity, especially when things get tough.

I mean, this is the big question, right? What do you do when your core beliefs just don't line up with the culture around you? It's a real struggle. And, you know, the author of Hebrews was writing to people feeling that exact same pressure. They were on the fringes, they were struggling to just keep going, and their problem, thousands of years ago, is basically our problem today.

The advice here is, believe it or not, more relevant than ever. So, here's how we're going to break this down. First, we'll look at the why, the core motivation behind their whole way of life.

Then we'll get practical and look at love in action. After that, we'll see how they stayed grounded in a pretty chaotic world. Then there's this really cool part about rethinking what sacrifice even means.

And we'll wrap it all up with this super powerful, really challenging idea of going outside the camp. Okay, first things first. What's the engine driving all these instructions? Well, the author sets everything up as a grateful response to God.

See, it's not about trying to earn points by taking off boxes on a checklist. It's about your life becoming a thank you for a gift you've already been given. The author uses this one specific Greek word that kind of unlocks the whole chapter.

Eu orestos. It means well-pleasing, and it actually shows up at the beginning and the end of his advice, like bookends. This is the whole idea.

It's not that you have to do these things, but that your life becomes this beautiful, fitting response to God's grace. It's something you get to do, not something you're burdened by. And this whole well-pleasing idea isn't left hanging as some vague spiritual concept.

Nope. The text gets super specific and connects it directly to what it calls sacrifices. These are real, tangible actions that show what this grateful life looks like.

So let's see what they are. So how does this all play out? Well, the first batch of these well-pleasing sacrifices is all about putting love into action. The author lays out three really down-to-earth ways this community was supposed to have each other's backs.

And what's really cool is they're all tied together by the Greek root for love, phil. First up, you've got Philadelphia, that deep brotherly, sisterly love for each other. Then there's philoxenia, which means love for the stranger, or what we'd call hospitality.

And third, a philergouros, which literally translates to not loving money. It's about being free from that grip of materialism. These three things were the absolute foundation of their community.

And this level of commitment was so, well, weird, that people on the outside totally noticed. There was the second-century writer, Lucian, who was actually making fun of Christians. But in doing so, he described this incredible devotion they had.

He saw that they really did treat each other like family and shared everything. He might have been mocking them, but he was also documenting something truly extraordinary. So that just begs the question, right? What on earth makes people act like that? What kind of belief could possibly create that level of devotion and self-sacrifice for a community? Well, the answer isn't in what they did, but in what they were anchored to.

To get that answer, we've got to look at their anchor. This community was getting hit from all sides with what the author calls diverse and foreign teachings. They needed something solid, a firm foundation that wouldn't just shift with every new trend or cultural pressure.

And the author paints this really stark contrast. On one side, you've got Jesus. He's described as constant, reliable, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He's the anchor. But on the other side, you've got all these other teachings, which are totally unreliable. They threaten to just carry them off, you know, like a boat that's come on moored in a storm.

And at the end of the day, the argument is this. Real, deep-down stability doesn't come from just following a bunch of external rules, which are summed up here with the example of rules about foods. It comes from grace, from resting in a secure relationship with God.

That's what makes your heart firm, what makes you unshakeable. Okay, so building on that idea of grace, the sermon hits this sort of theological peak. It totally reframes the whole ancient idea of sacrifice.

I mean, if your relationship with God is already secure, what does an offering even look like anymore? The answer is two things. The new kind of sacrifice isn't an animal on an altar anymore. It's your life.

First, it's a sacrifice of praise, what he calls the fruit of lips that publicly talk about God. So, your words. And second, it's real action, to do good and share.

Your words and your actions, together, become the new thank offering. So all of this, the love, the stability, the new idea of sacrifice, it all builds to this one final incredibly powerful metaphor. It's a call to action that sums up this entire way of life, going outside the camp.

The author starts with a fact that's both historical and theological. In ancient Jerusalem, executions happened outside the gate, away from the holy city. That's where Jesus was crucified.

He was literally put outside the place of belonging, outside the place of acceptance. And because of that, the author gives this direct command. If that's where Jesus is, then that's where his followers have to go.

Therefore, let us go out to him. It's a straight-up invitation to follow him to that same place. But yeah, going there has a cost.

It means you have to be willing to bear his reproach. That means accepting the same kind of social rejection, the same misunderstanding, maybe even the same marginalization that he did. It's about identifying with him, even when it's not the popular thing to do.

Now, this phrase, outside the camp, would have hit the original audience with this incredible double meaning. In their scriptures, outside the camp was the place of sickness, of death, of being an outcast. But it was also the sacred place where Moses went to meet with God.

So it's this paradox. It's a place of rejection by the world, but it's also a place of encounter with God. So what does it all mean? The call to go outside the camp is really a challenge to check our loyalties.

It's about being willing to step away from our comfortable, safe spots in society, if that's what it takes to get closer to God and to truly identify with Jesus. And that just leaves us with a huge question, one that's not just for ancient history. In our world today, with all of its own pressures and its own camps of what's acceptable, what does it mean for you to go outside the camp? What comfortable place might you be called to leave behind to live a life of real integrity?